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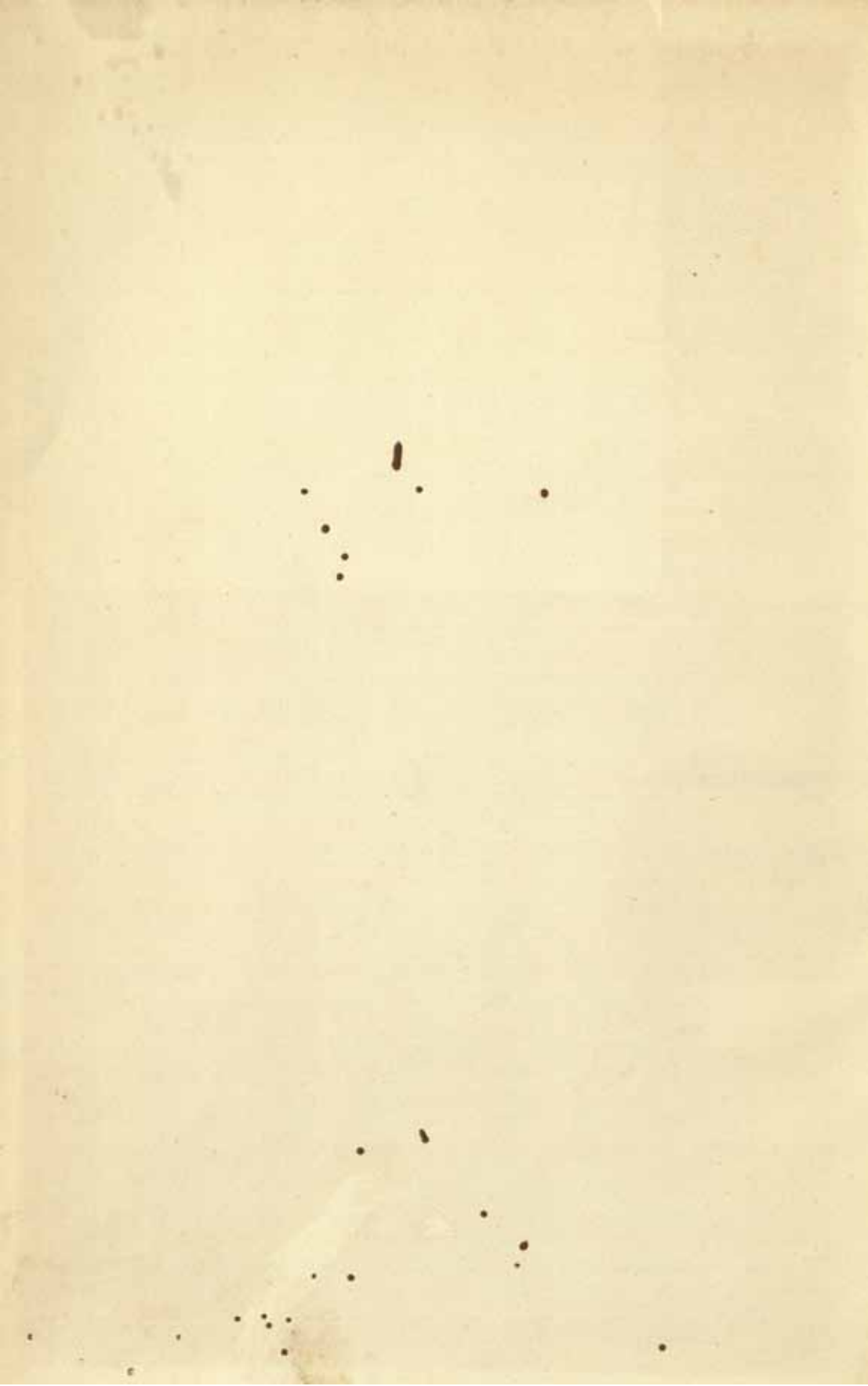
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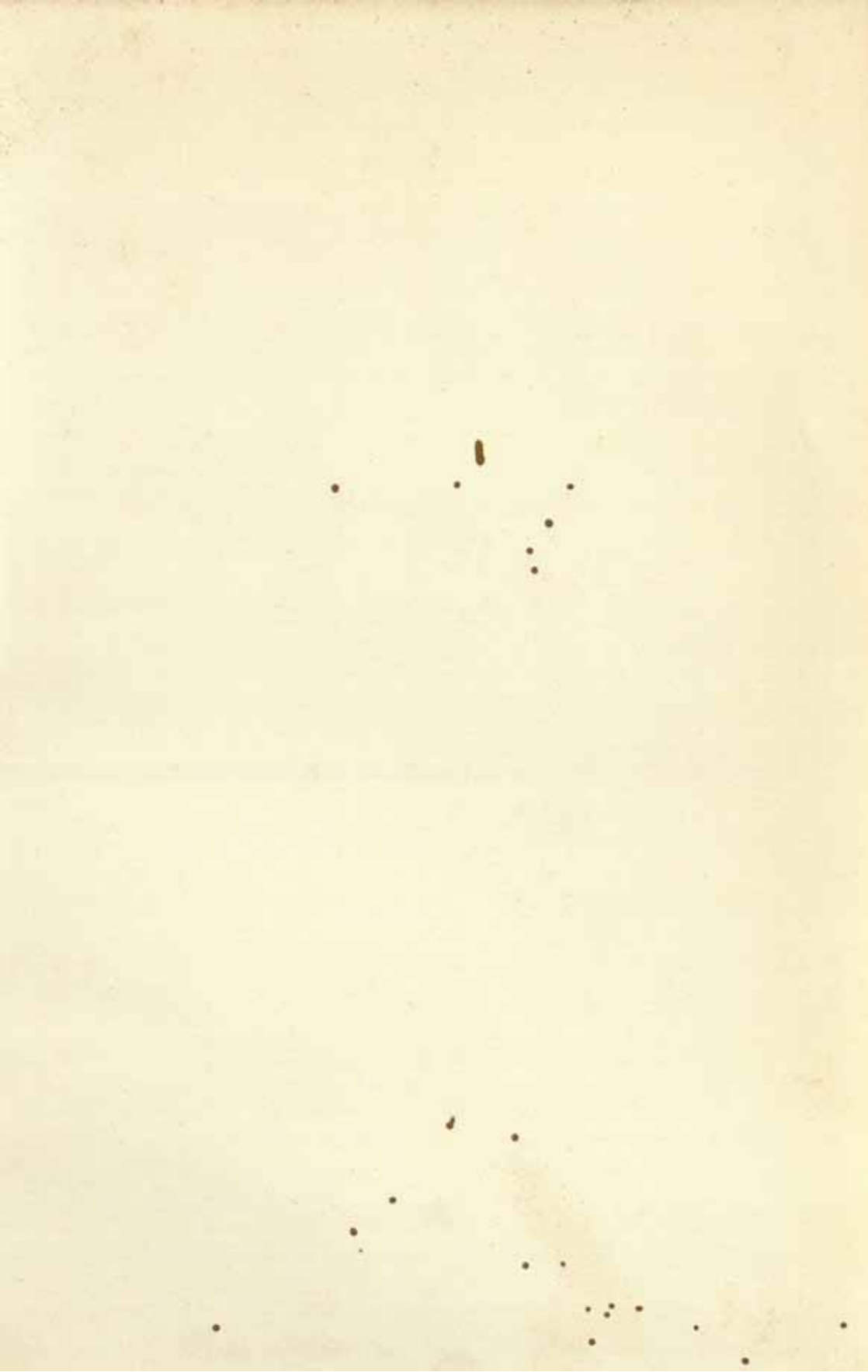
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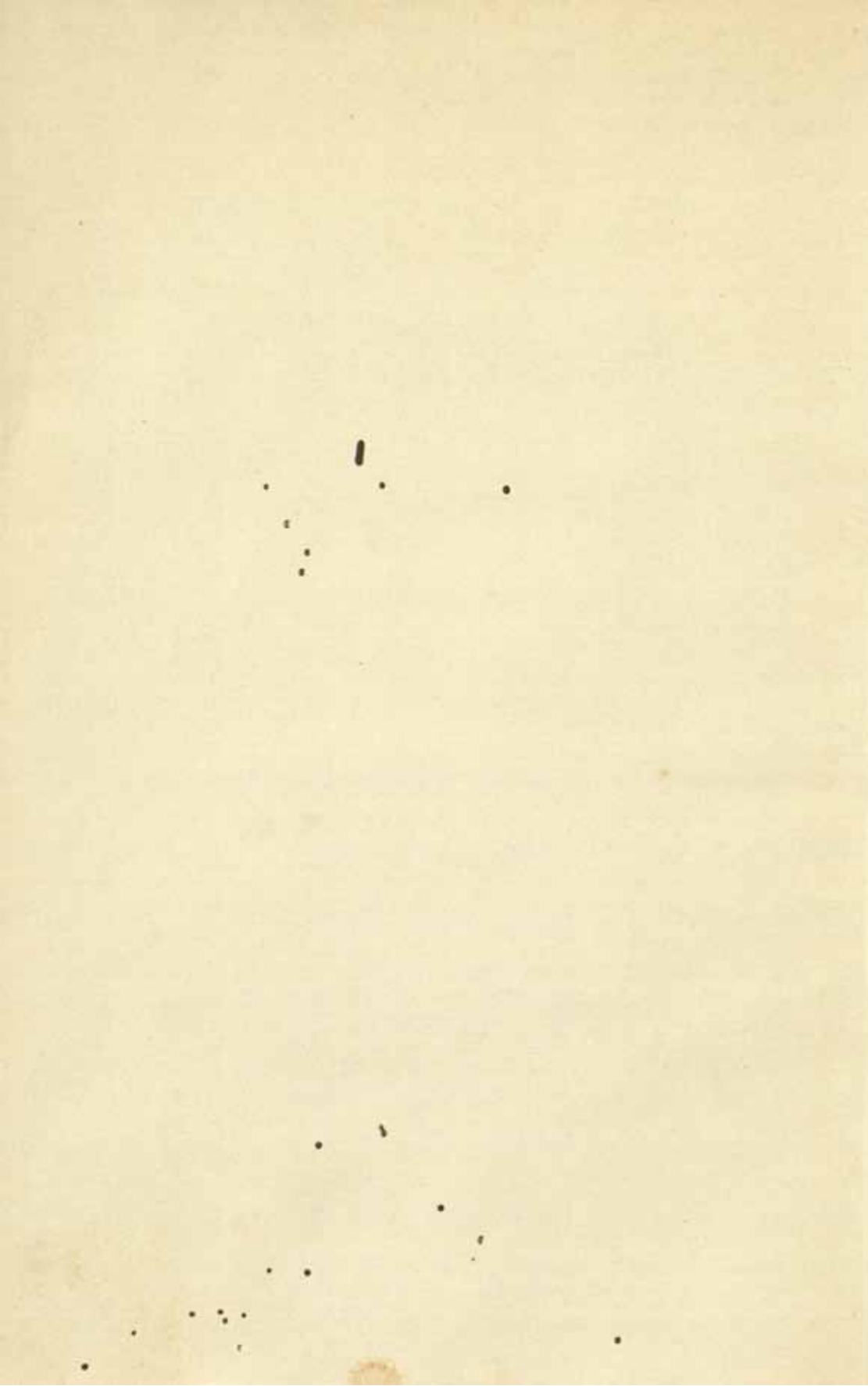
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ARABIC LEXICOGRAPHY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

107

# ARABIC LEXICOGRAPHY

ITS HISTORY, AND ITS PLACE  
IN THE GENERAL HISTORY OF LEXICOGRAPHY

by

JOHN A. HAYWOOD

(Lecturer in Arabic, School of Oriental Studies, University of Durham.)

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## PREFACE

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This little book—with all its imperfections—represents the fruits of a long love of the subject which began many years ago. At that time, I knew little Arabic, but, almost by accident, I bought a copy of the *Qāmūs* in an Arabic bookshop in Khartoum. As time passed, there grew in me the determination to write a history of Arabic lexicography, but the distractions of the duties of a Sudan Government servant prevented me from carrying out my plan. When, in 1955, I left the Sudan, and became Lecturer in Arabic in the University of Durham, I began the project in earnest, but even then the pressure of university teaching delayed me. Now at long last I have finished my task, though in a somewhat shorter form than I had at first envisaged. If it stimulates further and more detailed researches I shall feel that my work has not been in vain.

I must acknowledge the kindness of many, without whose help the work could never have been written. Sir James F. Duff, Vice-chancellor of the University of Durham, has generously helped to make the publication of the book possible. I also gratefully acknowledge help from the Durham Colleges Research Fund and from the Staff Traveling Fund. Professor T. W. Thacker, Director of the School of Oriental Studies, University of Durham, gave me constant encouragement. Among the librarians I must thank are: Mr. I. J. C. Foster, Keeper of the Oriental Books, Library of the Durham School of Oriental Studies; C. Pearson, Librarian of the London School of Oriental and African Studies; the Librarian of the University of Tübingen, who kindly supplied a microfilm of the "*Kitāb al-‘ain*"; and the Librarian of the Escorial, Madrid, who provided a microfilm of the "*Kitāb al-Jīm*" by Abū ‘Amr al-*Shāibānī*. The Director of the Iraq Museum in Baghdad supplied another microfilm of the "*Kitāb al-‘ain*". In Turkish lexicography, I gratefully acknowledge the help of Mr. C. G. Simpson,

Reader in Turkish at the School of Oriental Studies, University of Durham, and Mr. E. Birnbaum, Assistant Librarian at the same institution.

Finally, I must thank my wife who encouraged me, and tolerated my absence in my study night after night; and my publishers, both for agreeing to publish so specialised a work, and for the care which they have bestowed on it.

John A. HAYWOOD

Durham, June, 1959.



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## NOTES

### 1) Transliteration of Arabic.

hamza	غ gh
not shown, when initial, otherwise, '	ف f
	ق q
ب b	ك k
ت t	ل l
ث <u>th</u>	م m
ج j	ن n
ح h	ه h
خ <u>kh</u>	(consonant) و { w
د d	ي { y
ذ <u>dh</u>	Vowels:
ر r	Short. damma و u
ز z	fatha ا a
س s	kasra ا i
ش <u>sh</u>	Long. و ū
ص s	ا ā
ض ḍ (z in Persian).	Diphthongs ا ī
ط ṭ	ا au or aw.
ظ ṭ	ا ai or ay.
ع '	

### 2) Dates.

Where two dates are given thus: 1361/1942, the first is the Hijra date.

Where only the Hijra date is given, the letters A.H. are added, thus: 645 A.H.

Where Christian era dates alone are given, nothing is normally added, unless there is any likelihood of confusion. Thus, 1625 means 1625 A.D.

غبر الموتوق به وقد التفت به ما في وقال عدي في المله  
وقد حلف هم ذات قبله اذ لا الله امر المله الجيم  
واستند في الآلام بكلف على عدي ورجع عطفه من الجيوب  
وطال الخواشي المله الثوب فزوع على دفعه والحق العنقه قال  
نايغه المله في نجلي ما طال اللحن سؤفنا ونعلوا بها يوم الهياج السؤرا  
وقال المنكعبير كلف صباع مجذبات كذره فليجو هو منهم له الحام  
وطال اللوس من ابل صلا الضعوت واللقود العنات فالامر العسر  
كانه بفتح الحاحين لقوه وقوف من العنابر كاطأت شمالي مري  
وقال الرعي في الازراب وتعلم دوة فيهم ولله مسرتهم باخلا ومارق  
اذا ما الزبوا ولقد انا دى لعانهم بناجره الحقائق وقال امر الفسرك  
القام تطعمهم سلعى ومخلصه كرك لامين على نابل وقال الفضل  
في المنوج بلنجر وجهها ملحي ملنوجا ومرة بخازر مكنوجا  
والا في السود قال حميد  
ادى شبح الى الظلال كانه رواهب احر من الشوات مجذوب  
وقال الجيم ما ربحور قلب لحم العنق والمنسبر فالحميد  
جرت يوم دجنا بوهج لاجهاضة توار ولا ربا الغزال الجيم  
واللوب الطاب وقال تلووب طماب لا نسغي ولها فالحميد  
بغثن ما صمغفر زعبا كانها كرات تلفى مرة وتلووب  
واللوجه تغبر من اللوب قال حميد  
هو شجة الاقرب كالسيف ضيقها عامر وجام لوجه وذوب  
واللهكة الزكام وهو مله ط والنجاح الولة سول ارا له ملنجه  
مد اليوم الى اسنفر وقال ابو كانه

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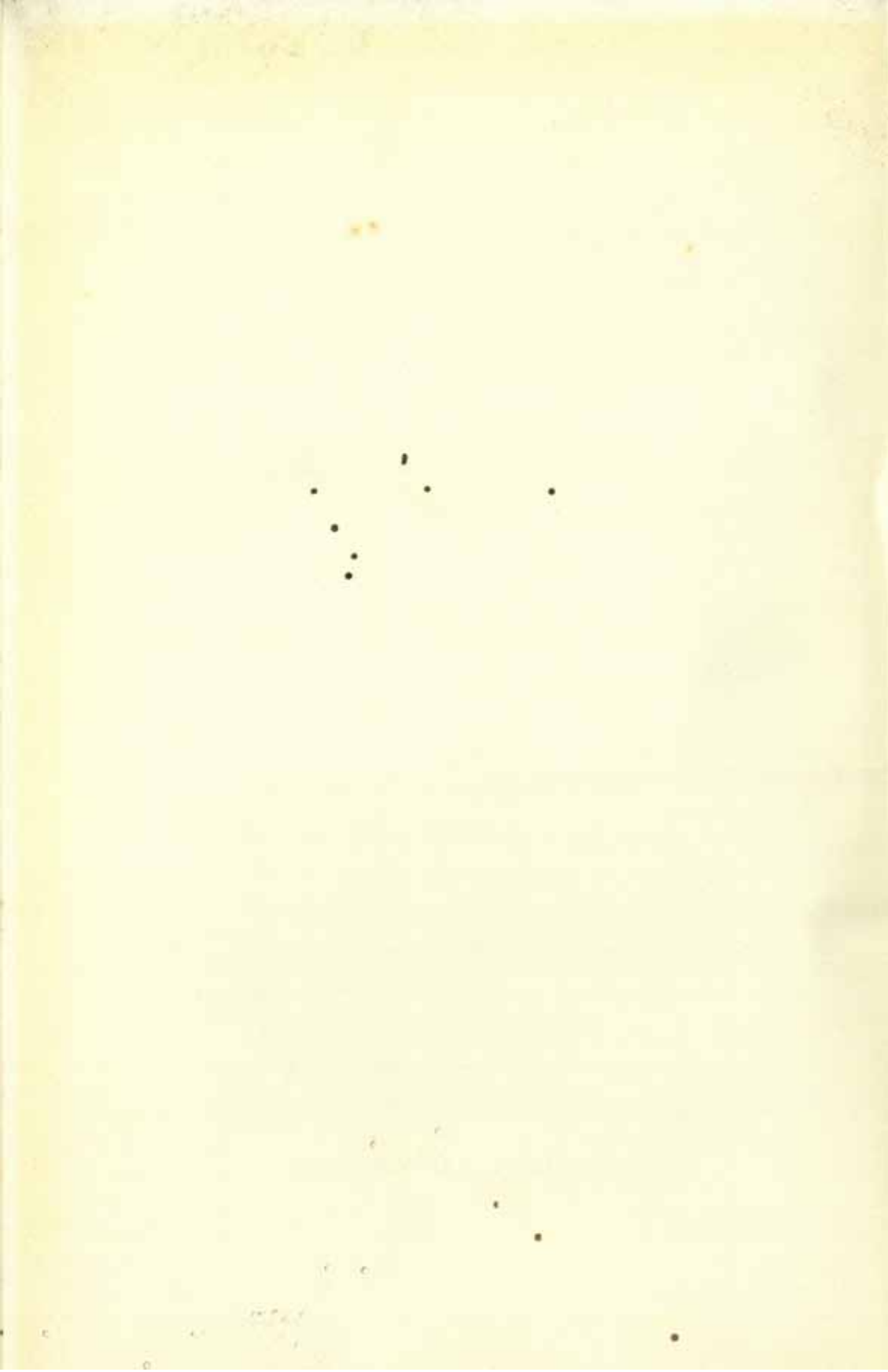
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كلمة

للاستاذ الرئيس السيد هبة الدين العلامة الشهرستاني دامته معاليه حول هذا الكتاب -  
فادام ظله

كتاب العين في اللغة لامام العربية الخليل بن احمد البصري المتوفى سنة ٢٤١ هـ هو اصل جليل هو الاول  
الاول لكتب اللغة بكل معاني الكلمة ومن عجيب امره ترتيبه على وضع ابجدى خاص به لم يقتف فيه اثر  
احد قبله ولا اقتفى اثره احد بعده واعجب من هذا انه النوات الاولى لكتبتنا اللغوية في حين ان النفا  
منه لم تبلغ شأوه فاستهل الخليل بالعين جوامع اللغة وكانت البدور من يدين فامسى كتابه الملال  
والبدور في وقت واحد واعجب من هذا وذاك ان هذا الاصل القديم عين قد اعترفت منه  
الاعيان وما اعترفت له بحقه ولا استمدت كتب القوم اليه فيما اخذته منه ففي مستور الاثر  
كما عاش مجهول القدر لكننا السك ينقش طبعه ولو بعد حين  
(هبة الدين)

أي بني مختبر ادهنا من غم أو شدة وغبرة الرجل صوته بقر أو ينفثي وغبرة نفاثته وغبرة نفا  
 عفر من صيد وبقا لا امرأة عفرى ملقى بوضع بخله وشوم وبقا لعن حاله أو عفر حيا وأصابها  
 بروج في ملحقها واستغاثا من أنها تخاف من فرمها وتفرهم أي تلتصقن من شوقها عليهن ويقال في الثنية  
 عفر له وجدعا قال سيبويه قد فاقوا عفرته أي قلت له عفر العرق ماء الجند يجرى من أصوله  
 وأن جمع فتيا سدا عراف مثل حدث وأحداث وقد عرق بعرق عرقا والذين عرق يخلف في العروق ثم ينهي  
 إلى الضرع قال الثماني عسى وقد ضمت ضرتها عرقا من طيب الطم صافي اللون يجرى وليس عرق وهو  
 الذي يجعل في سقاء ثم يشد على عصبه يديه ويخشيبه شين فاذا أصاب العرق فيه طعمه وتغير لونه  
 وعرفت الفرس تقرقا أي أترشبه حتى عرق قال الأعشى بعالي عليه الجبل كل عشرين ويرفع غلها  
 بالضحى ويعرف أو عرق الشجرة وعرق كل شئ أطنا به تشعب من أصوله ويقال استاصل الله  
 عرقاتهم بنصب الناء أي ثباتهم لا يجعلونه كالناء الزائدة في التانيث وقال بعضهم العرق  
 انما هي أروعة الأصل التي تشعب منها العروق على نقدر سعادة وهي عرق يذهب في  
 الأرض سفلا ويقال العرقان جماعة العرق الواحدة عرقه وهي الأرض التي تذهب سفلا  
 في الأرض من عروق الشجر في الوسط وتآذيه كناه جمع التانيث ولكنهم يصبونه كغولهم رابت  
 بناتك الخنثى على اللسان لونه مبيح على فعال والعرق نبات اصغر يصعب به جمعه وعرق العنق  
 فتقول انه لعرق له في الحسب والكرم وفي النوم والغرم ويجوز في الشعر انه لعرق وعرقه عام  
 وأخو الذي تقرقا وأخوه في عرقا عرقا وعرق فيه اللثام وأخوه في عرق العبد والاماء إذا لم يطله  
 ذلك وتخلق باخلا فمهم وتذكر كذا عرقا عرقا شرفا لاجري طلقا حتى إذا قيل ما بقى  
 تذكر كذا عرقا سو قبله وأجرت الخيل عرقا أي طلقا وأخوه العرس أي صار عربا كرميا  
 وأخوه الشجر والنبات امتد عرقه والعرق في الناس الخيل الذي فيه عرق من الكرم والعرق  
 سألني البحر على طول له وبه سقى العراق لونه على شاطئ دجلة والفرات وتقول دفت من الحافظ  
 عرقا وجمعه عرق وفي الحديث ليس لعرق ظالم حتى وهو الذي يغرس في أرض غيره وذلك أن الرجل  
 يبيعني إلى أرض تداحيها رجل قبله فيغرس فيها غرسا أو يحدت فيها حد ثابستوجب به الأرض  
 وعرق الزيادة والراوية الخرز المنقى الذي في سفله ويجمع على عرقا وثلاثة عرقه ووهون وثمن  
 خرزها قال ابن جرير من دى عرق في خرزه وهو لطيف فيده مضطر والعرق قوة خشية من فسته  
 على اللؤلؤ ورت دلوزات عرقونين وللمتعب عرقونان وهما خنثيان على جانبيه والعرق قوة كل آفة





## CHAPTER ONE

### LEXICOGRAPHY BEFORE THE ARABS

In the compilation of dictionaries, and other lexicographical works, the Arabs—or rather, those who wrote Arabic—were second to none until the Renaissance, with the possible exception of the Chinese<sup>1</sup>. A dozen or more major dictionaries, besides many vocabularies, both general and specialised, bear witness to their pre-eminence in this field, at a time when such works were almost unknown in Western Europe. Only recently have the Arabs themselves recognised the outstanding merit of their lexicographical heritage<sup>2</sup>, and it is high time for a full study of the subject to be written in English.

Dictionaries are so familiar today that, while realising the hard work their preparation entails, we nevertheless take them for granted. We assume that it is natural to list words in the alphabetical order of their letters, from the first to the last. Yet the history of lexicography in various languages shows that it did not seem so in the past. Great scholars put considerable thought into the matter, and there was much trial and error before the present system was evolved. In Arabic we find a particularly clear picture of this process of experimentation. At first, vocabularies of limited scope and uncertain arrangement were written. Then full dictionaries were written on an anagrammatic basis, according to an artificial alphabetical order based on phonetic principles, and separating roots according to the number of letters which they comprised. Later, roots were listed in rhyme order; that is, according to their final consonants. The present system—the alphabetical order of the initial—was tried by a few authors, usually with variations great or small, but it never gained wide currency. Despite this experi-

<sup>1</sup> See J. A. Haywood, *The History of Arabic Lexicography in Perspective*, Durham University Journal, New Series, Vol. XIX, no. 1, Dec. 1957. In this article, I now think that I overstated the case for the influence of Arabic Lexicography on European Lexicography.

<sup>2</sup> A. Darwish, in *Al-Maʿājim al-ʿArabiyya*, Cairo 1956, and previously in a thesis submitted to London University for the Ph. D. Degree on al-Khalil ibn Aḥmad. The next study of the subject before that was the Indian Ṣiddiq Ḥasan Khān's *al-Bulgha fī Uṣūl al-luġha*, Istanbul 1296 A. H. See also J. A. Haywood, *An Indian Contribution to the Study of Arabic Lexicography, the "Bulgha" of Muḥammad Ṣiddiq Ḥasan Khān Bahādur (1832-1900)*, in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Oct., 1956.

mentation, by the end of the Middle Ages the Arabs possessed a dictionary so widely available, that the first word in its fanciful title, which really meant 'ocean', became the common term for 'dictionary', and by the Nineteenth Century, even before the widespread use of printing in the Arab world, thousands of copies existed<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, it is a remarkable fact that, almost from the start, the compilers of Arabic dictionaries aimed at registering the complete vocabulary material of the language. Indeed, they were almost obsessed by the copiousness of the language, and were very mathematically-minded in this matter. In this, they differed from the earlier lexicographers of other nations, whose chief aim was to explain rare and difficult words.

Before we embark on the story of Arabic lexicography, it will be instructive for us to review the achievements of other nations before the Arabs in this genre. This will help us to make a just assessment of the position of the Arabs in the history of world lexicography; and it may also give some clue to the sources of the Arabs' ideas. Arabs are most reluctant to admit foreign influence in their literature, especially anything connected with their language. This is not merely due to the particular rôle of the language as the vehicle for the Quranic revelation, but to the misguided idea that to admit the influence of foreign ideas detracts from their own achievements. This is not so. However much the early Arab philologists may have owed to Greek and Indian notions, nothing can belittle the use they made of such notions. Before the end of the Medieval period they had produced the most exhaustive and copious dictionary in any language prior to the Nineteenth Century<sup>4</sup>. The truth is that in lexicography—as in many other fields—the Arabs occupy a central position both in time and space; between the Ancient World and the Modern, between the East and the West. If a Fifteenth-century Arab could be miraculously transported into Twentieth-century Britain, he would not be at all surprised to see the volumes of the "Oxford English Dictionary" on the library shelves: in some European countries, he would be surprised to see nothing comparable yet completed.

At this stage it would be as well to pause and consider what are the pre-requisites for the emergence of the dictionary as a literary form. Only when, in any large community, there arises a *lingua franca*, whether for religion, literature, or government, do we find dictionaries being compiled. A people who speak many different dialects, none of

<sup>3</sup> The *Qāmūs* of al-Fīrūzābādī: See Chapter 7.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Manẓūr's *Lisān al-ʿArab*; see Ch. 7.



which has gained the upper hand, do not produce dictionaries. It is chiefly religion, with its sacred scriptures—reinforced often by the political hegemony of one race or tribe over another—which makes intimate knowledge of an unfamiliar or obsolescent dialect or language essential to a large number of people. No doubt the study of Buddhist and Laoist texts was a strong fillip to Chinese lexicography. In Sanscrit, the Vedic literature was a similar incentive. In Greece, it was the old national epics, which had a quasi-religious importance. The Islamic Empire provided the ideal milieu for the cultivation of lexicography. One of many dialects of the Arabian peninsular (the Quraishite), which had previously been used in the poetry recited when men of different tribes gathered together, was hallowed as the vehicle of the Quran<sup>5</sup>. With the addition of the hamza, when the scripta plena emerged, this language was, as it were, “frozen” at a particular stage in its development<sup>6</sup>. It became the language of both religion and government—as Latin was in Western Europe during the Middle Ages—in an area stretching from the Atlantic to the Indus, from the Caucasus to the Sahara. Over this wide area, the conquering Arabs were thinly spread as a small minority, and in any case they intermarried with the local populations. They came from tribes as diverse as those of the Syrian desert and of the Yemen. It is not surprising that general ignorance of the written language—the language of the Qurān, the Ḥadīth and the Pre-Islamic poetry—was so often lamented, and that there was a crying need for both dictionaries and grammars. As time went on, the Arabic of everyday speech diverged increasingly from the written language, which was scarcely allowed to change, as it was the language of God. Grammar and syntax were simplified, and a host of foreign words were introduced—some to describe amenities not used by the simple Bedouin, and others to express philosophical ideas imported from the Greeks. Meanwhile, the growth of secular literature, both prose and poetry, patronised by princes, governors, and wealthy men, made a good standard in the use of the written language one of the hall-marks of the cultured man. As in Ancient Greece, rhetoric (*balāgha*) was an important subject of study, and, in Arabic at any rate, this required a wide vocabulary, including much that was antique and rare. Thus the “*gharīb*” and “*nawādir*” were eagerly sought.

<sup>5</sup> The Qurān being the word of God, in the Muslim view.

<sup>6</sup> For an account of pre-Islamic Arabic dialects, see Chaim Rabin, *Ancient West Arabian*, London 1951.



There are three main types of lexicographical book: the dictionary; the general classified vocabulary; and the short specialised vocabulary. The Arabs excelled in all three, though this study will be concerned chiefly with the first. Without trying to be too exact, we may define the dictionary as a balanced and comprehensive list of words, with their meanings explained, arranged in some logical order based on their components, not according to their meaning. In practice, this usually presupposes some sort of alphabetical order, except in languages like Chinese which have no alphabet. Whether the Sanscrit lexicographical works may be termed "dictionaries" is a debateable point. The words "balanced" and "comprehensive" are open to argument. There is no firm dividing line between the dictionary and the vocabulary, if the latter is arranged in alphabetical order. Common sense is the final criterion, and it tells us, for instance, that Ibn al-Athīr's "*Nihāya*"<sup>7</sup> is a dictionary, although it is restricted to Ḥadīth words; because within this restricted field it is comprehensive, and because it is in alphabetical order. On the other hand, Ibn Sida's "*Mukhaṣṣaṣ*"<sup>8</sup>, though exceedingly copious and comprehensive, is arranged according to meaning, and should therefore be termed a classified vocabulary. The dictionary and the vocabulary have different uses—though in the Medieval Arab world this difference was not so clear, since it was long the habit to learn all lexicographical works by heart. The dictionary is for looking up a word which one does not know; the vocabulary provides material for the author's use. (In the Twentieth Century, of course, vocabularies are primarily designed for travellers). Dictionaries may be classed as monolingual, bilingual, and polyglot. The last-named only arose in Renaissance Europe, and does not greatly concern us. The bi-lingual was of very rare occurrence in the Arab world, the chief exception being al-Zamakhsharī's Arabic-Persian Dictionary<sup>9</sup>. Until we come to the dictionaries of the European Arabicists, therefore, we shall be dealing with only Arabic-Arabic dictionaries.

The general classified vocabulary, which might also be described, in some cases, as a dictionary of synonyms, reaches its apogee of fulness and skill with the "*Mukhaṣṣaṣ*" which we have already mentioned, but there were many earlier efforts, though on a smaller scale

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 8.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapters 5 and 9.

<sup>9</sup> Published edited by Wetzstein in Leipzig 1884, as *Samachscharii Lexicon Persicum*.

—for example, Ibn Qutaiba's "Adab al-Kātib"<sup>10</sup>, and al-Tha'ālabi's "Fih̥ al-lugh̥a". Similar vocabularies exist in Chinese and Sanscrit.

The short specialised vocabulary was much favoured by the Arabs, especially in the early days of philological researches. Hundreds of them were written, and the pages of the "Fihrist"<sup>11</sup> contain long lists of them. The same subjects reoccur repeatedly—the horse, the camel, bees, characteristics of man, and so on. Yet it would seem that very few of these were written before al-Khalil's time. In addition, the Arabs wrote books about wordforms, grammatical features, rare words and popular errors, which were storehouses of vocabulary.

Lexicography is almost as old as writing itself. I know of nothing in early Egyptian, but the Sumerian schoolboy<sup>12</sup> used to copy out lists of cuneiform signs on clay tablets, to facilitate the learning of them. Several tablets have been preserved on which a number of signs are written out and explained, and then rewritten. Signs are usually grouped under subject headings. For instance, one tablet<sup>13</sup> lists nouns and verbs referring to professions, while on the reverse side are words dealing with family relationships and the status of children and slaves. These are, perhaps, the world's first classified vocabularies. The coming of the Assyrians to Babylonia was a stimulus to lexicography. Their language, unlike Sumerian, was Semitic, and the cuneiform signs had to be adapted to it. There grew up an extensive literature of "syllibars" giving the Assyrian translation of Sumerian signs. Some tablets are in four columns, showing the Sumerian sign, its meaning in Sumerian, the Assyrian form and the Assyrian meaning. One syllibar, known to Assyriologists as S<sup>b</sup>, became so popular that it ran into several 'editions' spread over a long period of time. In short, the germ of the dictionary idea was known in Assyria nearly a thousand years before Christ.

The first Chinese essays in lexicography<sup>14</sup> may be as old as the

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 9.

<sup>11</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*. In this work I refer to the Cairo edition of 1348 A.H.: Fluegel's edition is better known to European Arabicists.

<sup>12</sup> For Sumerian and Assyrian lexicography, see: C. F. Jean, *La Littérature des Babyloniens et des Assyriens*, Paris 1924, pp. 281ff; P. E. Van der Meer, *Syllibaries A, B<sup>1</sup> and B, with miscellaneous lexicographical texts from the Herbert Weld Collection*, Oxford 1938; Stephen Langdon, *Sumerian Grammatical Texts*, Philadelphia, 1917; and *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*, Part X, 1, 1900.

<sup>13</sup> No. Philadelphia 11, 384.

<sup>14</sup> See H. A. Giles, *A History of Chinese Literature*, London 1923, pp. 109, 120, 238, 385, for brief discussion; for a fuller account, see T. Watters, *Essay on the Chinese Language*, Shanghai 1889.



Assyrian—everything in China is supposed to have existed from time immemorial! But in hard facts, the first work to attempt the systematic definition of a large number of characters was the “*Ērh Ya*”, which may date back between 200 B.C. and the birth of Christ. It is, in reality, a classified vocabulary. Characters are grouped under 13 headings, such as ‘family relationships’, ‘utensils’, and ‘birds’. The earliest true dictionary extant is Hsü Shên’s “*Shuo Wên*”, written at the end of the First Century A.D. Though it explains about 10,600 words, it is not exhaustive, and even omits in the body of the work certain words used in the Introduction. The authors set out to explain the meanings of words occurring in important canonical treatises—and this is a parallel with early Arabic lexicography, which was an aid to the understanding of the *Qurân* and the *Ḥadīth*. The “*Shuo Wên*” is a pioneer work, and a useful guide to the language of the author’s time. Moreover, by analysing the characters according to their forms, and arranging them under 540 classifiers or radicals, the author made possible in Chinese, with its ideographic script, the dictionary proper as opposed to the classified vocabulary. He was, if you like, the *Khalil* of Chinese lexicography; but his system, unlike *Khalil*’s, was destined to last. Nevertheless immediately after him, this was not at all apparent. His successors were not all convinced of the wisdom of his system; some of them reverted to the classified vocabulary, and a new type of dictionary appeared—that in which characters were grouped phonetically, according to their sound; all words of the same sound being dealt with in one section, irrespective of their varied written forms. The phonetic arrangement was first employed by Hu Fa Yen, in a dictionary written between 581 and 601 A.D. It seems that the Chinese owed much of their knowledge of phonetics to Sanscrit influence brought by Buddhist monks. From them they learned to classify speech sounds according to the organs used in pronouncing them. We shall later suggest Indian influence, though indirect, on al-*Khalil*. A conventional method was evolved to show the sound of characters. For this purposes, two characters would be used for each word, one to represent the beginning, and the other the end. Thenceforward, numerous Chinese dictionaries were compiled, very often under Imperial patronage, culminating in the Kang-Hsi dictionary of 1717. The Chinese rivalled the Arabs in their deep interest in their language, their scientific approach to it, and their assiduous writing of lexicons. Nevertheless, despite repeated and well-attested contacts between the Caliphate and China, via *Khurāsān* and Central Asia, their

work can have had no influence on the Arabs. Yet it was worth mentioning here, if only for comparison. The Chinese experimented in dictionary arrangement until they found the method best suited to their language. True, they had special problems connected with an ideographic script; but the Arabs also had special problems, due to the largely triliteral nature of their language, the weak letters, and the lack of vowelising in ordinary writing.

At about the time of the birth of Christ, the twin sciences of Grammar and Lexicography came into prominence in both Sanscrit and Greek. This is of special interest to us, for we know of Greek and Indian influence in other fields of Arabic literature—the former in philosophy and the sciences, and the latter in fable and fiction. In both languages, grammar preceded lexicography; in both the impetus for philological studies was the desire to understand the obsolescent language of revered national literature. The Sanscrit Grammar of Paṇinī dates from roughly 300 B.C., but the first complete commentary on it did not appear until 650 A.D.<sup>15</sup> Long before Aristotle, according to Indian writers, Indian etymologists knew of four categories of words, and realised that all words could be derived from verbal roots<sup>16</sup>. The early lexicographical works were designed to facilitate the interpretation of religious texts, and to provide a body of rare words for the use of poets. They were all versified<sup>17</sup>. The earliest works have not been preserved, but the *Amarakoṣa* dates from about 500 A.D. It is a dictionary of synonyms in three books, grouped according to meaning, with an appendix of homonyms and indeclineables. After this many dictionaries (or, more strictly speaking, vocabularies), were compiled. However, it is only fair to say that the period of greatest activity was the Twelfth Century, by which time the Arabs had produced some of their finest dictionaries. An ideal arrangement was never found in Sanscrit, perhaps owing to the poetic medium used, and because dictionaries were meant to be learned by heart<sup>18</sup>. The classified vocabulary competed with several other methods. For instance, the longer entries might come first; words

<sup>15</sup> For further information on Sanscrit lexicography, see A. A. Macdonnell, *Sanscrit Literature*, London 1909; A. B. Keith, *A History of Sanscrit Literature*, London 1924; and F. Chakravarti, *The Linguistic Speculations of the Hindus*, Calcutta 1933.

<sup>16</sup> Chakravarti, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Compare the Arabic-Persian Vocabulary *Niṣāb al-Ṣibyān* by Abū Naṣr Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn, Farāhī, written in 617 A.H. and often printed.

<sup>18</sup> Though the same applies to Arabic Dictionaries.



might be arranged according to their initials or finals; or according to the number of letters they contained<sup>19</sup>; synonyms or homonyms might be grouped together; or a combination of several of the above principles might be employed. We may well ask whether such a muddled science can have influenced the Arabs at all. We must, of course, take note of the prominence not only of Persia, but also of the province of Khurāsān, in Arabic lexicography. Both al-Khalil's "Kitāb al-ʿAin" and al-Jauharī's "Ṣaḥāḥ" were said to have been compiled there. Moreover, we can see resemblances between the alphabetical order of Sanscrit and the special phonetic alphabet which al-Khalil so perversely used. Khurāsān lay astride the main route to India. Transoxiana was also a centre of philological work—one need mention only al-Zamakhsharī—at a later date. Just how much significance there is in the geography of lexicographical activity is hard to determine, but at any rate it gives food for thought and perhaps for future researches.

In Greece<sup>20</sup>, Aristarchus of Samothrace (220-145 B.C.) was one of the first to divide words into eight parts of the spears. But Greek philological ideas were coloured by philosophy, and the disputes of the Analogists and the Anomalists were transferred to linguistics. This was to have far-reaching influence in Latin, where it figured prominently in Varro's "De Lingua Latina", and perhaps also on Arabic? Is it too far-fetched to compare the Basrans, who set such store by "Qiyās", with the Analogists; and the Kūfans, with their study of Arabic dialectical forms, with the Anomalists? Is not the notion of the Anomalists behind the much publicised visits of certain lexicographers to Arabian desert tribes, as a corrective and a supplement to the theorisings of pedantic teachers? In Greece, mention is made of an alphabetic "Hippocrates Lexikon" by Glaucus dating from 180 B.C., but the golden age of Greek lexicography was the first few centuries A.D., especially in Alexandria. In the Second Century, Harpocration wrote a short alphabetical vocabulary of difficult words. In the Fifth Century both Hesychius and Orion compiled dictionaries. It must be noted that none of these works are anything like complete dictionaries. They are designed to explain unusual words. Moreover,

<sup>19</sup> Compare al-Khalil's separation of roots according to the number of consonants, whether biliteral, trilateral, quadrilateral or quinquilateral.

<sup>20</sup> For Greek Lexicography, see Müller, *Handbuch der Classischen Altertums Wissenschaft*, Vol. II, 1913, revised Munich 1934. The lexicons of Harpocration, Orion, Hesychius and Suidas have often been printed from the Renaissance onwards.

definitions—and quotations from authors, when included—are kept as short as possible. On the other hand, they are written in the modern alphabetical order. The first large-scale Greek dictionary was that written by Suidas in the Tenth Century. Considering the debt of the Arabs to the Greeks in the sciences, it is surprising that they did not benefit from Greek lexicography by using the modern alphabetical arrangement. The presence of Greek scholars in Persia has often been mentioned. Nūshīrwān, King of Persia, received seven Neoplatonists expelled by Justinian. Greek texts were translated into Pahlavi, and Gundeshāpūr became a famous centre of learning, especially in Medicine. Perhaps Greece gave the Arabs the dictionary idea, and India the phonetic alphabet and certain ideas of dictionary-arrangement. The shape the Arabic dictionary was to take doubtless owed much to the wayward genius of al-Khalīl, with his overscientific mind.

To complete the picture of lexicography before the Arabs, brief reference must be made to Latin<sup>21</sup>, though it can have had no influence on Arabic. The Romans took their linguistic ideas from the Greeks, but they did not compile alphabetical dictionaries, judging by extant works. Yet there are signs that alphabetical glossaries did exist, as there are vestiges of alphabetical order in parts of Nonius Marcellinus's "De Compensiosa Doctrina", a classified vocabulary of the Fourth or Fifth Century A.D. However, whether this is due to the sources he used, or the rearrangement of a Medieval copyist, we cannot determine for certain. The greatest monument to Latin lexicography is Varro's "De Lingua Latina", which is a discussion of words, not a dictionary. Varro lived from 116 to 27 B.C. Greek lexicography really came too late to affect Latin—and by that time, Roman civilisation was on the decline.

Such was the achievement of other nations in lexicography, when, in the Seventh Century, the Arabs, inspired by religion and love of war, burst forth from their barren peninsula, and created a world-empire. In that empire, scholarship was able to flourish because patronage was available in plenty. We have already seen that the dictates of religion demanded philological studies. These studies were especially necessary for foreigners who were subjects of the Khalī-

<sup>21</sup> For various aspects of Latin exicography, see Varro's *De Lingua Latina*, Loeb Classics edition with Translation, London 1938; Jean Collart, *Varron, Grammaire en Latin*, Strasbourg 1923; and W. M. Lindsay, *Nonius Marcellinus*, Oxford 1901.



fas. At the same time, these foreigners, especially the Persians, provided the brains needed for scholarship. The Arabs were proud of their language—and in this respect some non-Arabs were 'more Arab than the Arabs'! They were proud of its copiousness, proud of its many features which they fancied were peculiar to it, but chiefly proud because it was God's language. This language must be kept pure, free from foreign pollutions, and from the corruptions due to ignorance and laziness. Hence, the linguistic analysis—and even the phonetic ideas—of al-Khalil—were important, as they helped to distinguish Arabic from foreign words. Al-Jauharī's attempt to incorporate in his dictionary only what was correct was a revival of this puritannical attitude to the language.

With these motives, the Arabs<sup>22</sup> set to work and produced a whole series of dictionaries and vocabularies. The purpose of this book is to give an account and an appreciation of their efforts. The story is long and complicated, the names are many and confusing; and a merely chronological account would be too rambling to be illuminating. I have therefore divided the book into chapters according to the different dictionary arrangements used, beginning with the phonetic-anagrammatic, then the rhyme arrangement, and lastly the modern alphabetical arrangement. What I call the "Kufan" method is perhaps a subdivision of the third type. I am partly indebted in this plan to the example set me by A. Darwish with his pioneer work, "Al-Ma'ājim al-'Arabiya"<sup>23</sup>. This division of the story is only roughly chronological, as the third method really overlaps the second, though it never made much impact on the Arabs until the Nineteenth Century.

<sup>22</sup> I use the term "Arabs" for those who wrote Arabic, although most of them were Arabs in name only. But there seems to be no other term for them.

<sup>23</sup> See note 2 above.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ORIGINS OF ABABIC LEXICOGRAPHY

There is almost universal agreement among Medieval Arab writers that the first grammarian in their language was Abū l-Aswad al-Duʿalī (d. 69 A.H. aged 85), a man who fought for ʿAlī at the battle of Ṣiffin, and a mediocre poet<sup>1</sup>. Although, as Ibn Khallikān says<sup>2</sup>, "a great diversity of opinion exists relative to his name, his genealogy, and his surname", there seems no particular reason to doubt the story, even though no philological works by him are extant. The various isnāds tracing how his teaching was passed on to the subsequent generations of scholars deserve the same respect accorded to Ḥadīth isnāds; and we may with reason admit that traditions of this sort often contain some grain of truth. Less credible, however, is the oft-repeated assertion that Abū l-Aswad owed his knowledge of grammar to the Khalīfa ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. The Shiʿites were never satisfied until they had traced all human sciences and arts to ʿAlī!

The various stories describing how Abū l-Aswad came to do his grammatical work are interesting for the light they shed on the factors which led to the study of grammar and lexicography. The two sciences were as yet not differentiated. One account is that given by Ibn al-Nadīm in the second Maqāla of the *Fihrist*<sup>3</sup>. He says: "Muḥammad ibn Ishāq says that most scholars agree that grammar was taken from Abū l-Aswad al-Duʿalī, and that he took it from the Khalīfa ʿAlī". After mentioning a few rivals for the position, he goes on: "People have differed as to the reason which led Abū l-Aswad to the grammar which he sketched. Abū ʿUbaida says that Abū l-Aswad learned grammar from ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib", but did not tell it to anyone else; until one day Ziyād<sup>4</sup> sent to him asking him to prepare an 'imām' or guide which would enable men to understand the Qurʾān. He refused, but later, hearing a wrong reading of a Quranic passage which, owing to a mistake in vowelings, gave an almost blasphemous

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Khallikān, I, 662; *Fihrist*, 59 ff.; Abū Ṭayīb ʿAbd al-Wāhid ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥalabī, *Marātib al-Nahawiyyin*, Cairo 1935; al-Zubaidī, *Tabaqāt*, 13 ff.; Qiftī, I, 4 ff.; *Diwān Abī al-Aswad al-Duʿalī*, ed. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Dujailī, Cairo 1954.

<sup>2</sup> I, 662.

<sup>3</sup> Cairo edition, 59 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Governor of Basra.



meaning, he changed his mind and said that he would do as Ziyād had ordered. He asked for a scribe, who, however, proved unsatisfactory, so another was appointed. He gave him strict instructions to write in the vowels when he dictated. "When you see me open ("aftaḥu") my mouth at a letter, put a point over it. When I close it, ("aḍummuhu"), put one before the letter. When I pucker it up ("ak-suruḥu"), put a point under it". The "Fihrist" adds another story describing how a Persian named Sa'd, who claimed to be a Muslim and the client of an Arab, passed Abū l-Aswad one day, leading his horse. "Why aren't you riding?" Abū l-Aswad asked. The man replied: "Inna farasī ḍā'ilum" (my horse is sturdy), mispronouncing the word "ḡā'ilum", which means lame!

Some of those present laughed, but Abū l-Aswad rebuked them, saying: "These mawālī (clients) have formed a desire for Islam, and have been converted, so they have become our brothers: if only we were to lay down (the rules) of language for them! ... "Fa waḍa'a lahum bāb al fā'il wa l-maf'ūl" (so he prepared the section on subject and object for them).

Ibn al-Nadīm seeks to justify the crediting of the invention of grammatical study by Abū l-Aswad, by claiming to have seen an old manuscript belonging to a bookcollecting friend of his living in Medina. This consisted of a few pages on "al-fā'il wa l-maf'ūl" compiled by Abū l-Aswad, in the handwriting of Yahyā ibn Ya'mar, and countersigned by the grammarians 'Allān and al-Naḍr ibn Shumail. But Ibn al-Nadīm lost track of the manuscript after the book-collector died.

Somewhat different stories are told by the Spanish lexicographer, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al Ḥusain al-Zubaidi (d. 379 A.H.). Not only did he write an abridgement of the "Kitāb al-ʿAin"; but his collected biographies of philologists, "Ṭabaqāt al-Naḥawiyīn wa l-luḡhawiyīn"<sup>5</sup>, is a major source-book for the history of lexicography in the first 300 years. He begins the latter work with an account of Abū l-Aswad, saying: "He was the first to establish (the science of) the Arabic language, to lay down its methods, and to establish its rules, and that was (at a time when) the speech of the Arabs became disturbed, and people high and low came to make mistakes. So he laid down the rules of the fā'il, the maf'ūl bihi, the muḍāf, and naṣb, raf', jarr, and jazm". After repeating the legend that Abū l-Aswad was taught by 'Alī, he describes how he heard his daughter making

<sup>5</sup> *Fihrist*, 60.

<sup>6</sup> Cairo 1954-

a vowelling mistake with the 'verb of wonder' ("fi'l al-ta'ajjub"). On a hot day, she meant to say: "Mā ashadda l-ḥarr" (How strong is the heat!), but made a mistake in vowelling, saying "ashaddu", thus turning her statement into a question, "what is the hottest (kind of) heat?" Abū l-Aswad replied: "Al-Ghaiz!" (the Arabic word for extreme heat). He then corrected her, and laid down the rules of grammar. He went to Ziyād in Baṣra one day, and told him that the Arabs had changed their speech through intermingling with foreigners, and asked permission to write a grammar. Ziyād refused, but was induced to change his mind when he himself witnessed the ridiculous results of ignorance of grammatical forms. A man came to him, saying "Our father has died and left children", but put 'father' in the accusative and 'children' in the nominative. A man from the tribe of Banū Laith expanded Abū l-Aswad's book, and it was later completed by 'Isā ibn 'Umar in two books entitled "al-Jāmi'" and "al-Mukmil".

Al-Zubaidi tells several stories illustrating Abū l-Aswad's knowledge of rare expressions, and there is an amusing story of his ability to engage in witty conversation with desert Arabs. One day, he went out hunting with his friends, and when they sat down to have food, a desert Arab approached them with the customary greeting, "as-salām 'alaikum". To this, Abū l-Aswad, no doubt realising the reason for the Arab's courtesy, replied rudely, "That is a word uttered", or perhaps, in modern slang, "You don't say so?" "Shall I join you", said the Arab? "There is more room behind you than in front of you", said Abū l-Aswad. "The hot sun is burning my feet", said the man. "Urinate on them!", said Abū l-Aswad. "Have you anything to give me to eat?" asked the Arab. "I shall eat and feed my own folk, and if there is anything left over, you can have it rather than the dog", "I've never met a fouller man than you", said the Arab. "I'm sure you have", said Abū l-Aswad... "but your memory is short!"

For a later account, we may turn to al-Qiftī<sup>7</sup>, another writer of collected biographies of Grammarians and lexicographers. The legend of 'Alī, the proto-grammarian, is now fully established. Abū l-Aswad is reported to have said: "I visited the Khalīfa 'Alī one day, and found him lost in thought. So I said to him:—"What are you thinking about, Oh Commander of the Faithful?" He replied:—"I have heard (examples of) incorrect speech in your country, and I should like to write a book on the principles of Arabic". I said to him: "If only

<sup>7</sup> Vol. I, 10 ff.



you would do that, you would perpetuate this Arabic language among us". Then I went away, and returned to him some days later. He handed me a paper on which was written: "The Noun (ism) is what describes what has a name; the verb (fi'l) is what describes the movement of that which has a name; the particle (ḥarf) describes what is neither noun nor verb". 'Alī then told Abū l-Aswad to continue and expand this opening. We are then given to understand that Abū l-Aswad submitted his work to 'Alī. In it he wrote about those particles like "inna" and "anna" which govern the accusative. 'Alī pointed out that he had omitted "lākinna". Al-Qifṭī claims to have seen a grammatical manuscript in a Cairo bookseller's, which all agreed belonged to the introduction which 'Alī handed to Abū l-Aswad. He then repeats many of the stories we have already told, quoting verbatim from the "Fihrist", and stating that Ibn al-Nadīm is to be relied on as a careful investigator. Next he gives a few pages of biography of 'Alī, the first grammarian—but oddly makes no further mention of grammar or lexicography in them. Then comes the biography proper of Abū l-Aswad<sup>8</sup>. After a lengthy discussion of the correct spelling of his name—whether Du'īlī, Du'alī, Di'īlī, or Dīlī—we are told that he was one of 'Alī's Quranic readers. Then a supposed letter from 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb is quoted in which he says to Abū Mūsā:—"Let Abū l-Aswad teach the people of Basra i'rāb". 'Abū l-Aswad was a staunch supporter of 'Alī's caliphate, and was made Qāḍī of Basra. After 'Alī's murder, he was smitten with the palsy.

Al-Qifṭī relates<sup>9</sup> that Abū l-Aswad had a troublesome and unpleasant neighbour who was also a distant relative. He used to throw stones at him morning and night. When he complained to the neighbour's family, and they told him, the neighbour justified himself saying: "It is God who has assailed him because he has broken off blood relationships and is quick to injustice". When Abū l-Aswad heard this, he retorted: "By heaven, I will not live next door to one who makes me out to have broken with my family, and tells lies about my Maker. For if God had assailed me, he would have aimed true!" So he sold his house and bought another elsewhere. His family said, "You have sold your house". He replied, "It is not my house I have sold, but my neighbour". This saying spread, and gave rise to the proverb "al-jāru qabla l-dār". (Your neighbour matters more

<sup>8</sup> I, 13 ff.

<sup>9</sup> I, 21.

than your house). Abū l-Aswad wrote a poem about the incident. Another story tells how a wife whom he had divorced complained to Ziyād, governor of Baghdad, claiming custody of a son. Abū l-Aswad said to her: "I am more deserving of the son; I carried him before you did, and he issued from me before he did from you". (literally, "I placed him before you placed him"). The wife replied: "You bore him when he was light, I when he was heavy; you brought him forth in pleasure, and I brought him forth in pain". This witty reply won her the case.

Ibn Khallikān, writing in the Thirteenth Century, gives a few other interesting facts. Abū l-Aswad's aim in writing his grammar was to guide the public, and enable them to understand the Book of God. As is usual with Ibn Khallikān, there are a number of interesting and amusing stories. Reynold A. Nicholson thought so highly of the Biographical Dictionary that he compared it with Boswell's *Life of Dr. Johnson*. Certainly he makes his characters live, hitting off a characteristic by an apt anecdote. He tells us that Abū l-Aswad's meanness was proverbial. On one occasion, he gave a notorious beggar supper. After the meal, he would not let him leave until the following morning. He afterwards said that his sole motive for giving the man a meal was to rid others of a pest for one night at least! Once when someone asked him whether he was not tired of wearing a tattered cloak, he replied that there were other tiresome things which could not be got rid of so easily. When he was on his deathbed, a visitor bade him be cheerful, for God's forgiveness was awaiting him. He cynically replied: "But where is that shame which I ought to feel, if any of my deeds require forgiveness?"

Ibn Khallikān's summing up is that Abū l-Aswad was "one of the most perfect of men". Be that as it may, we certainly have a vivid picture of the man handed down to us. He was quick-witted, swift and telling in his repartee even to the point of 'smuttiness'—indeed, just the sort of character whom the Arabs would find entertaining, and therefore admire. But how much of what is written about him is fact, and how much fiction? This is hard to decide. First we must prune off the references to 'Alī, as being merely Shi'ite propaganda. As to Abū l-Aswad himself, while it is true that the individual stories about him might equally well apply to many other people, yet they do add up to a credible picture of a personality. Probably, the persistent traditions of his grammatical work should not be entirely ignored. However, interesting as the speculation on the man



himself may be, the stories are more important to the scholar for what they suggest than for what they say. The first point to be noted is that the *raison d'être* for Arabic linguistic studies was religion—it is significant that Abū l-Aswad is stated to have been a *qārī*<sup>2</sup>, a Quranic reader. Secondly, the growing ignorance of correct Arabic is attributed partly to foreign elements, especially Persian, and it takes the form primarily of mistakes in accidence, in the vowel endings, and also in the pronunciation of those letters peculiar to Arabic. There are close parallels with the modern colloquial dialects<sup>11</sup>, and the later therefore seem to date very far back. The need for grammatical teaching was felt in religion, then; no doubt it was also felt in government. Abū l-Aswad helped to fill that need. What his precise contribution was, we cannot exactly assess, as no philological writings of his are extant. But the lack of an accepted system of indicating vowels must have made his work difficult.

In discussing Abū l-Aswad, we have quoted more anecdotes than we shall normally do in this study, with the object of showing the reader what sort of material exists for the study of Arabic lexicography. Apart from the texts of the dictionaries and vocabularies themselves, whether printed or in manuscript, we must rely chiefly on works of collected biography such as those which we have mentioned. These works are spread over a long period, the later ones repeating most of what the earlier ones have said with additions. To attempt to sift truth from fiction is almost impossible, and is hardly worth the effort. It does not follow that because a certain story is only given by later writers, it is necessarily less reliable. It may be derived from other early sources not now available. For our main conclusions in this study, we must rely on the evidence of the dictionaries themselves. The collected biographies obviously provide salient facts in the lives of the lexicographers, and help to make them seem real persons. They also give useful information about lexicographers whose compilations have not survived.

Abū l-Aswad is classed as a grammarian, not a lexicographer: yet it is right that he should open an account of Arabic lexicographers.

<sup>10</sup> R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, Cambridge 1953, p. 452.

<sup>11</sup> For example in Egypt and the Sudan, *Zuhr* (noon) is pronounced "ḡuhr", but "Dābiṭ" (officer) is pronounced "zābiṭ". At a later date, when the Kūfāns wished to belittle Sībawaihi, they told a story of how al-Farrāṣ visited the grammarian, to pay his respects to the famous man. He was shocked to hear him say to his servant girl: "hāti dhīka l-mā'a min dhāka l-jarra" (bring that water from that jar), wrongly making "mā" feminine and "jarra" masculine.

We mentioned in Chapter One that grammar precedes lexicography: this was so in Sanscrit and in Greek. Grammar and lexicography proceeded side by side in Basra, and that city knew no rival in these studies until the sister-city Kūfa became famous shortly afterwards. Lexicography (*luḡha*) was initially the study of words which, though they occurred in the Qurān, the Ḥadīth, and pre-Islamic poetry, were not known to everyday speech. The vocabulary of religious literature could be checked by reference to the old poetry, by analogy (*qiyās*), or by consulting desert Arabs<sup>12</sup>, certain tribes of which were thought to have preserved unsullied the language of the Revelation. L. Kopf has recently suggested that this consultation was much rarer than is usually accepted, and that the usual criteria were poetical examples and theoretical considerations, above all unsystematic etymology. This is doubtless correct. I feel sure that this reverence of the bedouin is part of the "mystique" which gave exaggerated respect to so-called pure Arabs. It was probably encouraged mostly by non-Arab elements, especially the Persians, and it attained the status of a theory of history in Ibn Khaldūn's "Muqaddima". Yet, of the major lexicographers, Ibn Duraid and al-Jauharī certainly spent a considerable time among desert tribes. It is worth pointing out, however, that tribes said to have been consulted by lexicographers were often not those of Arabia itself, but those of the desert lying between Syria and Iraq—those most in contact with non-Arab peoples.

The essence of Arab education was learning by ear rather than eye, especially in the early times immediately following Abū al-Aswad. One teacher would quote from his own teachers, and his pupils would quote from him. There were good reasons for this system. Manuscripts of books were expensive, and so learning them by heart was normal. Even when the Arabic scripta plena was established, vowels were not usually written in texts. Thus, as one generation succeeded another, a chain of authority would be created like the isnād of a ḥadīth. But this idea was not pushed to its logical conclusion in lexicography. Still, for the early years, we can trace the authority of the teaching of men like al-Khalīl going back to Abū l-Aswad.

The studies started by Abū l-Aswad split into: two separate sciences—*naḥw* (grammar) and *luḡha* (lexicography or philology)<sup>13</sup>. Although

<sup>12</sup> See L-Kopf, *The word definitions in the indigenous Arabic lexicons*, Hebrew text with English summary, Jerusalem 1953. This is an extract from a voluminous doctorate thesis.

<sup>13</sup> The words "*luḡha*", which may be derived from Greek "*logos*", has many meanings. It may mean language, a word or expression, or a dialectic form,



the two were closely interconnected, and we find great scholars like al-Zamakhsharī writing outstanding works in both fields, the same man seldom excelled in both. The functions of the two were clearly defined. The *lughawī* (lexicographer) had to ensure that the pure speech of the Arabs was handed down by checking words and expressions, and incorporating them in vocabularies and dictionaries. The grammarian had to show how this material was used in connected speech, making an analysis and a synthesis, and stating rules. Where the two overlapped was in the subject of derivation.

In both these twin sciences, a major work of genius was produced towards the end of the Eighth Century of our era—al-Khalīl's "*Kitāb al-ʿAin*" in lexicography, and Sībawaihi's "*Kitāb fī l-Nahw*" in grammar. Sībawaihi was al-Khalīl's pupil. It is reasonable to suppose that these works were preceded by others on a smaller scale, but, as far as can be ascertained up to the present, these have not survived. The biographers give us information about a few philologists between Abū l-Aswad and al-Khalīl, but little is said about their written works. Almost all of them were connected with religious studies in some way, and it would seem that most of them were content to teach orally, without recording their teaching in book form. They were noted for their knowledge of the "*gharīb*", that is, rare expressions, especially those of the Qurān. The parade of this sort of erudition never ceased to be a feature of Arabic lexicography. For example, Yahyā ibn Maʿmar, a pupil of Abū l-Aswad, fell into disgrace in Irāq when he proved the governor, al-Ḥajjāj, to have committed "*lahn*", that is, used incorrect Arabic. On being sent to Khurāsān as Secretary to a general, he continued to plague al-Ḥajjāj by filling the general's despatches with rare words.

ʿIsā ibn ʿUmar al-Thaqafī (d. 149 A.H.), of the third generation of scholars after Abū l-Aswad, is credited with two books, "*Kitāb al-Jāmiʿ*" and "*Kitāb al-Mukmil*" which were called 'the sun and the moon' by al-Khalīl himself, who is said to have learned from him, though he was never his regular pupil<sup>14</sup>. ʿIsā was a Quranic reader with a taste for the *recherché*. He introduced obscure forms in his Quranic readings, and was what we might call a 'pompous show-off'. When he fainted in Basra market on one occasion, a crowd gathered. He recovered consciousness, and told them to "be off" in

or common usage. For example, a lexicographer might say of a certain usage: "*wa hiya lughā fī banī tamīm*" (and it is a form used among the Banī Tamīm).

<sup>14</sup> See Ibn Khallikān, II, 419ff.

words so rare and pedantic, that a bystander remarked: "This man is speaking Hindi". He taught Sībawaihi grammar, but the latter deserted him for al-Khalīl. According to Ibn Khallikān, Sībawaihi's "Kitāb" is based on 'Isā's "Jāmi'" together with al-Khalīl's comment on it. It is said that 'Isā extended the scope of grammar beyond the Fā'il and Maf'ūl on which Abū l-Aswad had concentrated, and dealt with the whole field of grammar. He left about seventy treatises.

We can safely conclude that whatever philological work was carried out before al-Khalīl largely took the form of oral teaching. Such of it as was written down was superceded by the "Kitāb al-'Ain" in lexicography and by Sībawaihi's "Kitāb" in grammar. These works not only finally separated *luḡha* from *naḥw*; they established the forms major works on these two subjects were to take. The arrangement of the material in Sībawaihi's "Kitāb" was retained, in the main, by subsequent grammarians for 1000 years, while al-Khalīl's dictionary form was imitated by others for two centuries.



## CHAPTER THREE

### AL-KHALİL IBN AḤMAD

In the year 248 A.H. (862-3 A.D.), a bookseller arrived in Basra from the province of Khurāsān in North-east Persia, bringing with him a dictionary of the Arabic language in forty-eight parts or copy-books<sup>1</sup>. Its title was "Kitāb al-ʿAin" (the book of the letter ʿAin), and it was ascribed to a famous scholar who had been dead for over 70 years. This man was Al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, or, to give him his full name, Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAmr ibn Tammām al Farāhīdī (or al-Furhūdī) al-Azdī al Yaḥmadī. (100/718-19 to 170-175/786-791). Word had previously reached Basra that the work was in the library of the Ṭāhirids, the virtually independent dynasty ruling Khurāsān<sup>2</sup>. The bookseller who had brought it to Basra apparently sold it for 50 dinārs<sup>3</sup>.

To appreciate the excitement which the arrival of this manuscript must have occasioned, one has only to study the biography of its supposed author<sup>4</sup>. Al-Khalīl had been the shining light of the Basra school—an expert in lexicography, the teacher of Sibawaihi in grammar, and the first man to codify the complex metres of Arabic poetry; not merely a great scholar, but a man of original ideas. His name had been legendary in his lifetime; indeed he was the first fabulous figure in Arabic philology since Abū l-Aswad and much more substantial than that somewhat shadowy forerunner. He was born in Oman in Southeast Arabia of parents of modest means, but moved to Basra at an early age. He soon became well-known as a scholar in several fields, including lexicography, grammar, the sharīʿa, mathematics, music, and poetry, and was characterised by a devotion to learning undefiled by the desire of worldly gain. In this he was almost unique among Arab savants, who generally thought nothing of maliciously discrediting a fellow-scholar in order to ingratiate themselves with some prince or noble. Of al-Khalīl we are told<sup>5</sup> that when Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī al-Hāshimī sent for him, giving him, as an inducement, money, a robe,

<sup>1</sup> *Fihrist*, 63.

<sup>2</sup> Lane-Poole, *Muhammadan Dynasties*, 128.

<sup>3</sup> = approx. 336 grains of gold.

<sup>4</sup> See Darwish, 13-16; Zubaidī, *Ṭapaqāt*, 43ff.; Qiftī, I, 341ff.

<sup>5</sup> Zubaidī, *op. cit.*, 43.

and fruit, he kept the fruit, but returned the rest to the would-be patron. He also sent a poem in which he said that real wealth lay in the mind, not in money; and that, from this point of view, he himself was rich, though externally poor. Wealth, he wrote, is often the sign of men with no solid foundation within them.

Such was his craving for knowledge, that when he went on the pilgrimage to Mecca, he prayed God to give him some knowledge in which he would be the sole authority. When he returned to Basra, he was inspired to elucidate the principles of prosody<sup>6</sup>. His inspiration came from hearing the rhythmical beating of the blacksmith's hammer on the anvil. He postulated fifteen metres: al-Akhfash subsequently subtracted two and added one. When his son heard him reciting his metres—"fa'ūlun mafā'ilun" and the like—he rushed out to tell people that his father had gone mad: yet Khalīl's analysis immediately became the recognised one, and has remained so to this day<sup>7</sup>. It also became the basis of Persian, Urdu, and Turkish prosody.

Al-Khalīl's standing is well illustrated by the often-repeated story of how he spent a whole night in discussion with Ibn al-Muqaffa', the celebrated translator of "Kalila wa Dimna". When asked how he found al-Khalīl, the other replied: "I found him a man whose intellect was greater than his knowledge". On the other hand, al-Khalīl's report on Ibn al-Muqaffa' was that his knowledge was greater than his intellect<sup>8</sup>. Perhaps the strangest story of all is that told by al-Zubaidī of how the "King of Greece" (Byzantine Emperor) sent al-Khalīl a letter written in Greek<sup>9</sup>. He had it a month before he was able to decipher it. When asked how he managed to decipher it, he said: "I said (to myself), the letter must begin 'in the name of God' or something of that sort. So I worked out its first letters on that basis, and it came right for me". Al-Zubaidī goes on to say that this was the basis of al-Khalīl's "Kitāb al-mu'ammā" (Book of obscure language). This book is not referred to by several of the other biographers, and the whole story does not merit serious attention—though it would be most convenient to believe that al-Khalīl really learned Greek, and therefore could have had first-hand knowledge of Greek lexicography. But the story does at least illustrate his ana-

<sup>6</sup> This story is mentioned by Yāqūt, Qifī and Ibn Khallikān.

<sup>7</sup> See Dr. Ibrāhīm Anīs, *Mūsīqā l-Shī'r*, Cairo, undated (195?), Ch. III, p. 45.

<sup>8</sup> See Zubaidī, p. 45. The story is told by several others, including Qifī.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.



lytic and mathematical mind, which led him to the permutative or anagrammatical arrangement of the "Kitāb al-ʿAin".

Al-Khalīl worked as a teacher of language in Basra, and counted many scholars of distinction among his pupils. The most famous was Sībawaihi, whose "Kitāb", as we have seen, did for grammar what the "Kitāb al-ʿAin" had done for lexicography. It is generally accepted that Sībawaihi owed much to his teacher. There is no need to labour the point, beyond saying that of the 858 occasions on which the grammarian quotes other scholars in support of his statements, no less than 522 refer to al-Khalīl<sup>10</sup>.

Al-Khalīl's absent-minded preoccupation with matters of the mind was the cause of his death. While lost in thought one day, he bumped into a pillar of the mosque in Basra, and sustained a fatal fall. According to al-Qifṭī, he was trying to work out an accounting system which would prevent his slave-girl from being cheated by the green-grocer; or alternatively, he was scanning poetry<sup>11</sup>.

Among his works mentioned by the biographers are the following:

"Kitāb al-ʿArūḍ" (the book of prosody);

"Kitāb al-Shawāhid" (a book of poetical quotations, presumedly in support of grammatical or linguistic points);

"Kitāb al-Nuḡaṭ" (the book of diacritical points);

"Kitāb al-nagham" (a book on music);

"Kitāb al-ʿAwāmil" (the book of words which govern other words in grammar);

"Kitāb al-Jumal" (book of sentences—on syntax);

"Kitāb al-Īqāʾ" (the book of tuning—on music).

None of these works remain—the only extant work is his dictionary, the "Kitāb al-ʿAin", and this has had a rather shadowy existence. Although it is mentioned from time to time by Arabic authors during the Medieval period, up to the time of al-Suyūṭī<sup>12</sup>, and was quoted by later lexicographers, it seems quite clear that it was not a common work of reference, and that few copies existed. The discovery of the text in modern times was due to Père Anastase-Marie de Saint-Élie (known as al-Ab Anastās Mārī al-Karmalī), an Iraqi monk who specialised in Arabic philological studies<sup>13</sup>. Among other things, he

<sup>10</sup> ʿAlī Fakhṛī al-Nājīdī, *Sībawaihi, Imām al-Nuḡaḍh*, Cairo 1953, p. 98.

<sup>11</sup> Qifṭī, I, 346.

<sup>12</sup> "Al Muzhin" Cairo 1325 A.H., 2 vols.

<sup>13</sup> Among his works are: *Nuḡaṭ al-luḡaṭ al-ʿArabiyya*, Cairo 1931, and *Aḡlāṭ al-luḡaṭiyyin al-aqdamīn*, Baghdad 1932.

was interested in the possible biliteral origin of Arabic, and its common ancestry with Indo-European languages. In 1911 he founded "*Lughat al-ʿArab*", a journal devoted to Arabic philology, and in it, in 1914, he announced the re-discovery of the long-lost text of the "*Kitāb al-ʿAin*" in the following words <sup>14</sup>:

"Today we bring the good news to all Arabs that *Shāikh Kāzīm Effendi al-Dujailī* has discovered a copy of this book (the "*ʿAin*") in *Karbalā*, and another in *Kāzimiya*. The copyists of both these manuscripts are Persians who are not good at Arabic; consequently both copies are corrupt and deficient... When I saw these two copies in such condition, I was extremely hurt to think that this book could hardly be printed in that horribly corrupt and garbled form... and I remained in a state of perplexity until I came across a third copy written by an Arab who understood the language..." He went on to say that he was going to publish the book, with the aid of the three manuscripts, and anticipated that it would take up 2500 pages. Shortly afterwards, the first part appeared in Baghdad, amounting to only 144 pages. Unfortunately, the entry of the allies into Baghdad in the First World War caused the loss or destruction of al-Karmalī's effects, including the stocks of Part one of the "*ʿAin*". At the present time, only two copies are known to exist, both in Cairo: one in "*Dār al-Kutub al Miṣrī*" and the other with the "*Majmaʿ al-lughat al-ʿArabiya*". The whereabouts of the three manuscripts used by al-Karmalī are not known now, but two other manuscripts exist. One is in the Baghdad Museum, and was transcribed by "*al-Samāwī*" in 1936 <sup>15</sup>. The other is in the Library of Tübingen University, transferred from Berlin), and dates from 1927. It was copied for the orientalist Reutter. The manuscript states that the copyist used a manuscript in the library of *ʿAlī Habat al-Dīn al-Shahrastānī*, formerly Minister of Education in Iraq. There are slight differences between these two manuscripts—both of which, however, are very clearly written—and between both of them and the part printed by al-Karmalī. The latter is the only one of the three to name the poets from whom quotations are used, but it seems likely that the names were added by al-Karmalī himself <sup>16</sup>.

The "*ʿAin*", then, has had a somewhat chequered history. Its first

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Darwish, *op. cit.*, pp. 81ff.

<sup>15</sup> Baghdad MS no. 773; the Tübingen MS is no. 1635. Darwish numbers them as 509 and 1653 respectively, but I have checked the numbers from microfilms kindly supplied by the two libraries. The text of the Tübingen MS is very corrupt.

<sup>16</sup> Darwish, 88.



appearance is veiled in mystery. The author of the "Fihrist" makes the point that there is no 'riwāya' tracing it back to al-Khalīl; that is, there is no oral tradition, passed on through a chain of successive scholars, establishing that al-Khalīl taught the book to any of his pupils, or even mentioned it to them. We must also note that the only manuscripts available are of this century. It is not surprising that the Arab world, with the great reliance it placed on oral tradition, should have looked for an alternative author, or at least a co-author. The choice fell on al-Laith ibn Naṣīr ibn Ṣayyān, a native of Khurāsān. He is said to have been al-Khalīl's pupil only for a short period, when the latter visited Khurāsān, where he wrote the "Ain". Apart from his supposed collaboration with al-Khalīl, nothing further seems to be known about al-Laith, and it is tempting to reject altogether his part in the dictionary. Yet here again we must pay some attention to persistent tradition, and at least acknowledge the doubt. The whole question was gone into by Ibn Durustawaih (871-958 A.D.), in a detailed book which is unfortunately lost. Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān<sup>17</sup> discusses the question at some length, and the various views are also analysed by A. Darwīsh<sup>18</sup>, who concludes that al-Khalīl is indeed the author. There are several shades of opinion: on the one hand, it was argued that al-Khalīl never wrote the book, but merely suggested the idea of it; al-Laith wrote it and ascribed it to his master. Another view was that al-Khalīl wrote it with a co-author: or that he started it, and someone else finished it. The least common view is that al-Khalīl wrote the whole work. One suggestion is that al-Khalīl merely wrote the portion dealing with the letter 'Ain' and that al-Laith finished it according to his master's plan. I have already suggested elsewhere<sup>19</sup> that al-Khalīl may have intended merely to list all words in which the letter 'Ain' occurs, as this letter was rarely pronounced in Persia and further East—but this is pure conjecture. It would make the phonetic-anagrammatic arrangement more excusable, but would necessitate explaining away the introduction. Certainly, from our knowledge of al-Khalīl, we can say that the strange arrangement is in keeping with his original mind. The "Fihrist" says<sup>20</sup> that al-Khalīl

<sup>17</sup> In his *Al-Bulgha fi Uṣūl al-Lughah*, Istanbul 1296/1879, pp. 157-162. This work is an excellent introduction to Arabic lexicography, though old-fashioned in its approach. See J. A. Haywood, *An Indian Contribution to the Study of Arabic Lexicography*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Oct., 1956, pp. 165-180.

<sup>18</sup> pp. 47-68.

<sup>19</sup> In my article mentioned in no. (1<sup>1</sup>) above.

<sup>20</sup> pp. 64/65.



said to al-Laiṭh: "If someone made a plan, and wrote the letters alif, bā<sup>2</sup>, tā<sup>2</sup>, ṭhā<sup>2</sup>, and so on, he would then include all the language of the Arabs... He should arrange it under biliterals, tri-literals, quadrilaterals, and quinquilateral roots. There is no speech known to the Arabs with more than that". Laiṭh went on to recount: "So I began to question him, and he explained to me. But I did not let things rest at his explanations, but visited him repeatedly for this purpose for a number of days. Then he fell ill, and I went on the pilgrimage. I was still anxious about him, and feared that he might die of his illness, so that what he was explaining to me would come to nothing. Then I returned from the pilgrimage, and went to see him: and, lo and behold! he had written all the letters according to the contents of this book. He used to dictate to me what he knew (to be correct). As for what he doubted, he would tell me to verify it, and if it proved correct, to incorporate it (in the book)". Yāqūt suggests that most of the book was written by al-Laiṭh. Ibn Kḥallikān mentions the odd view that al-Kḥalīl only began the work, but that it was finished by several of his pupils, including al-Naḍr ibn Shumail, al-Muʿarrij al-Saddūsī, and Naṣr ibn ʿAlī al-Jahdamī. These scholars are then supposed to have suppressed the part completed by the master, and replaced it by a simpler version of their own. This story assumes, therefore, that none of the work as handed down is by al-Kḥalīl, but the idea and arrangement are his. This story cannot be taken seriously—the notion of a number of eighth-century Arab scholars cooperating in one work would be almost unique, and if anyone did help Kḥalīl in the work, we are bound to return to al-Laiṭh. The fact that nothing further is known about the latter might be considered suspicious—or it might be considered too poor a story not to be true.

Apart from the mystery surrounding its appearance, there are several factors which might have led men to minimise al-Kḥalīl's part in the composition of the "ʿAin". Firstly, there was the jealousy of later lexicographers. In the introduction to his "Tahdhīb"<sup>21</sup>, al-Azharī says that the "ʿAin" is unreliable, and that al-Laiṭh was largely responsible for it. Yet in the body of his dictionary, he often quotes from the "ʿAin" in support of his statements. Moreover, in the introduction, he gives full credit to al-Kḥalīl for the arrangement he is going to use, and quotes verbatim from al-Kḥalīl's introduction. It would seem that al-Azharī was bent on proving that his dictionary

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter 5.

was superior to all that had gone before, not excluding the "Ain". But such was al-Khalīl's fame, that al-Azhari could not bring himself to accuse him of so many errors and shortcomings: he therefore had to find a scapegoat. A similar point of view, but without the egotism of al-Azhari, is expressed by al-Zubaidi in his abridgement "*Mukhtaṣar Kitāb al-ʿAin*"<sup>22</sup>. He says: "Al-Khalīl laid down the lines of the book, and arranged its division into chapters; but others who were unreliable filled out this skeleton"<sup>23</sup>. According to al-Suyūṭī<sup>24</sup>, al-Zubaidi wrote a letter to a fellow scholar who had complained of his prejudice against al-Khalīl, saying that he had a high opinion of al-Khalīl who was without equal in his age, and had done excellent work in prosody and music, as well as lexicography. But the "Ain" contained mistakes which al-Khalīl could never have made, and it was in fairness to him that he minimised his share in the dictionary. In his "*Ṭabaqāt*"<sup>25</sup>, al-Zubaidi manages to write five pages about al-Khalīl without a single reference to the "Ain". Exaggeration of the faults of the "Ain" might have been due to Kufan propaganda, as al-Khalīl had been considered the leader of the Basran school in his time. The same motive might have prompted the denial of his authorship.

The problem of the authorship of the "Ain" will probably never be convincingly solved; but a few pointers may guide us in formulating our opinion. Knowing al-Khalīl's original mind, we must credit him with a major share at least in the planning. On the other hand, the persistent legends of Laith cannot be ignored. It is noteworthy that the work was said to have been written in *Khurāsān*, of which province al-Laith was a native. This area would form a natural point of contact with Indian culture. Though al-Khalīl was the sort of man to invent the anagrammatical arrangement, it is too much to believe that his phonetic ideas were his own. If, as seems possible, they were based on Sanscrit traditions, it is natural to think of al-Laith as the link. As to the exact share of each of the two men in the finished work, there are various permutations from which to choose. But it is reasonable to assume that al-Khalīl wrote, dictated or taught the earlier part in full, so that in finishing it, al-Laith had a pattern to follow. To speculate further than this might be interesting, but it

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 5.

<sup>23</sup> *Darwīsh*, 53.

<sup>24</sup> *Muḥir* I, 49ff.

<sup>25</sup> pp. 43-47.

would be unprofitable. Nothing can detract from al-Khalīl's genius. To have conceived the idea of a comprehensive Arabic dictionary, even with the help of the ideas of other men and peoples, and to have started writing it, is achievement enough for any eighth-century Arab. After all, no-one denies al-Khalīl the credit for codifying Arabic prosody, even though his book on the subject is not extant. Suffice it only to say that the "Kitāb al-ʿAin" is a landmark, not only in Arabic lexicography, but in the history of world lexicography.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### KITĀB al-'AIN

The best way to introduce the plan of the "Kitāb al-'Ain" and the ideas behind it is by a translation of the author's introduction. It is a remarkable essay for the Eighth Century. Admittedly, we cannot be sure that al-Khalil wrote it, and the adding of Introductions to Arabic books by later editors, and ascribing them to the original authors, was quite a common practice. The expression "qāla l-Khalil" (al-Khalil said) is slightly ambiguous. But there seems little doubt that the Introduction does represent al-Khalil's ideas. The translation is from the Baghdad manuscript:

"We seek God's guidance and entrust ourselves to Him, for he is sufficient unto us, and He is an excellent Manager. This is the work which the Basran al-Khalil compiled on the letters alif, bā', tā', containing what the Arabs spoke in the range of their speech and expressions, without deviating from that at all. His aim was that through it the Arabs should be known through their poetry, proverbs, and discourse, in an unequivocal manner. So he brought his thought to bear on it. He was not content to begin the work from the first letter of the alphabet, namely, the alif, because it is a weak letter. The first letter having proved unacceptable (fātaḥu), he could not bring himself to begin with the second, the Bā', without prior consideration and deep investigation. So he set to work, and considered all the letters, and tried them out, and established that the most suitable with which to begin, was the innermost letter (in point of pronunciation). His method of testing was to open his mouth and demonstrate the letters thus: ab, at, aṭh, aḥ, a<sup>c</sup>, agh, and he discovered that the innermost letter in the throat was the 'ain, so he made it the beginning of the book. Then he passed on to the next higher, then the next, and so on, until he came to the last, that is, the mīm. So if you are asked about a word, and want to know its position, look at the letters of the word; and whichever letter you find coming first (in al-Khalil's alphabet), you will find the word in that (letter's) chapter. For al-Khalil put the letters alif, bā', tā', ṭhā' according to their point of pronunciation (makhrāj), beginning from the throat, and this is their arrangement and sequence:—'ain, hā', ḥā', khā',



ghain, qāf, kāf, jīm, shīn, ḍād, ṣād, sīn, zāy, ṭā<sup>2</sup>, dāl, tā<sup>2</sup>, zā<sup>2</sup>, dhāl, thā<sup>2</sup>, rā<sup>2</sup>, lām, nūn, fā<sup>2</sup>, bā<sup>2</sup>, mīm, wāw, alif, yā<sup>2</sup>, hamza. Abū Ma'ādh 'Abdallāh ibn 'āyidh(??) said: Laith ibn al-Muzaffar ibn Naṣr ibn Ṣayyār told me, from al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, the whole of what is in this book. Laith said, al-Khalīl said, the Arabs' speech is built up of four types (of root); the biliteral, trilateral, quadrilateral and quinquilateral. The biliteral consists of two letters, as "qad", "lam", "hal", "law", "bal" and the other particles of this kind. Trilateral verbs, like "kharaba", "kharaja" and "dakhala" are constructed of three letters. Similarly nouns such as "umar", "jamal" and "shajar" are constructed of three letters. Quadrilateral verbs are built on four letters, like "dahraja", "hamlaja", and "qarṭasa"; similarly nouns such as "abgar", "aqrab", "jundub" and the like. Quinquilateral verbs<sup>1</sup> such as "ismankala", "iqsha'arra", "ishanfara" and "isbakarra" are built on five letters, also nouns such as "safarjal", "hamarjal", "shamardal", "kanahbal", "qara'bal", "aqanqal", "qabathār", "quṭhubān" and the like. The (initial) alif in "ismankala", "iqsha'arre" (and so on) is not part of the root, but is introduced in these and similar verb-forms in speech so as to provide the tongue with a pillar or ladder leading to the first letter of the root. For the tongue cannot pronounce unvowelled letters, and therefore requires the alif of waṣṭ. In "dahraja" and "hamlaja", however, it needs no alif as a ladder, as, no doubt, you will realise. Note that the "rā" in "iqsha'arra" and "isbakarra" is really two rā's, one of which is assimilated into the other. The tashdīd is the sign of this assimilation. Al-Khalīl said: the Arabs have no root with more than five letters, whether noun or verb. So whatever letters you find in noun or verb in excess of five must be additions to the root, not part of the original form of the word. An example of this is "qara'balān"; the root form is "qara'bal". In "ankabūt", for instance, the root form is "ankab". Al-Khalīl said: no noun form has less than three letters, an initial, a medial and a final. This makes three letters, as in "sa'd", "umar", and so on. The latter word begins with 'ain, has mīm in the middle, and closes with rā<sup>2</sup>. As for "zaid" and "kaid", the "yā" is an intrinsic part, and is not to be treated as a letter of increase, (the last few words are obscure in the text). To make biliterals like "qad", "hal", and "law" into nouns, you must introduce the tashdīd and say (for

<sup>1</sup> Note that these are not genuinely quinquilateral verbs — which do not in any case, occur in Arabic. The "n" in "ismankala" and "ishanfara", and the second "r" in "iqsha'arra" are letters of increase.

example): "hādhīhi lawwun mukawwanatun", and "hādhīhi qaddun ḥasnatu l-kitāba", adding a wāw to a wāw and a dāl to a dāl. Then you incorporate the two, putting a *tashdīd*, which is the sign of incorporation and (an indication) of the third letter (of the noun). As Abū Zaid says:—

"Laita shi'rī, wa aina minnī laitun?

Inna laitun wa inna lawwan 'anā'u."

[Would that I knew, ...but what point is there in my "would that"?

Truly "would that" and "if only" are (mere) weariness].

He added *tashdīd* to "law" to make it a noun. Laith said, I said to Abū Duqayṣ (Daqīṣ): "Hal laka fīya zabdun was raṭbun?" He said: "Ashaddu l-halli, wa arkhāhu". He doubled the lām when he made it a noun. He (Laith) said: nouns do occur formed from two letters, whereas their complete form and their significance is trilateral, as in "yad", "dam" and "fam". For the third letter has gone because of its weakness. This letter came to the word with sukūn, being unvowelled by its very nature, at the end of a word, as in "aydin" and "admin"<sup>2</sup>. When the nūnation came on a quiescent letter, there were then two consecutive quiescent letters. The nūnation, being part of the declension (i'rāb), was fixed, so the quiescent letter disappeared. If you want to recognise such words, look for them in the plural and the diminutive; for example, aydin, plural, and yudaiya, diminutive. It (the full form) is also found in the verb, as in "damiyat yadun" (a hand bled). For the dual of "fam", you say "famawāni", for the wāw is the missing letter. Al-Khalīl said: But the root of "fam" is really f-w-h, as you can see, since the plural is "afwāh", and the verb is "fāha - yafāhu", which means to open the mouth to speak. (idha fataḥa fāhahu li l-kalām). Abū Aḥmad Ḥamza ibn Zar'ā said, he (Khalīl) said: tanwīn enters the word "yad", and he mentioned that the tanwīn is (the sign of) declension. But in fact the declension consists of ḍamma and kasma, which are added to the dāl in different situations. The tanwīn differentiates between noun and verb<sup>3</sup>. Have you not noticed that you say "yafa'alu", and you find no tanwīn coming into it? You have doubtless also noticed that you say "ra'aitu yadaka" (I saw your hand), and "ʿajibtu min yadika" (I admired your hand).

<sup>2</sup> Plurals of "yad" and "dam".

<sup>3</sup> Because verbs have no tanwīn (nūnation).



You inflect the *dāl*, but you do not find any *tanwīn*. As *tanwīn* is (the sign) of declension (*iʿrāb*), it could not have lapsed. As for his reference to "*famawānī*", the *wāw* introduced in place of the suppressed radical letter. The suppressed letter is really *hāʾ*, which people slurred alongside the *wāw*, then the *mīm* came in among them. The *wāw* in "*famawānī*" was introduced in error; for the poet saw a *mīm* which had been introduced into the word, and came to the conclusion that the letter missing from "*fam*" came after the *mīm*, which was an interloper in the word; so he introduced the *wāw* in its place, thinking that it had fallen away from it, and pronounced it.

Al-Khalīl said: Note that there are six alveolar and labial letters (*al-ḥurūf al-dhulq wa-shafawīya*), *rāʾ*, *lām*, *nūn*, *fāʾ*, *bāʾ*, *mīm*. These letters have been termed "*dhulq*" because the "*dhalāqa*" or sharpness in the pronunciation of these letters is with the edge of the tip of the tongue. Three of them, *rāʾ*, *lām*, and *nūn*, are lingual, and come from the tip of the tongue; and three, *fāʾ*, *bāʾ*, and *mīm*, are labial, and are emitted from between the lips. The lips play no part in the pronunciation of the sound letters, except these three. The tongue is not moved (in pronouncing letters) save in *rāʾ*, *lām*, and *nūn*. The other letters rise and pass over the back of the tongue within the incisor teeth, ranging from the point of pronunciation of the *tāʾ* to that of the *shīn* between the upper palate and the back of the tongue. The tongue plays no part in them except in the movement of the two folds: they do not come from the tongue proper, like the *rāʾ*, *lām*, and *nūn*.

The pronunciation of *jīm*, *qāf* and *kāf* is between the root of the tongue and the uvula, in the remotest part of the mouth. As for the pronunciation of 'ain, *hāʾ*, *khāʾ*, and hamza, it is from the throat. The hamza comes from the furthest part of the throat, uttered volubly and forced out. When lengthened, it softens and becomes *yāʾ*, *wāw* and *alif*, in a manner not known in the sound letters. Now when the six (labial and lingual) letters were pronounced and emitted by the tongue, they proved easy to form, and became common in speech-patterns. So no true quinquiliteral roots are free from them, or at least from one of them. Al-Khalīl said: if you come across a quadriliteral or quinquiliteral word free from lingual and labial letters, you should realise that it is modern and made-up, not Arabic. For you do not find in Arab speech a single word (of this type) without one or two lingual and labial letters—or more. Laith said: I said; how could made-up words of foreign derivation fail to contain these letters? He (Khalīl) said: as, for example, in *khāṣaʿthaj*, *khāṣaʿthaj*, *kāṣaʿlaj*, and similar



forms<sup>4</sup>. These are adaptations of foreign words not admissible in Arab speech, because they contain no lingual or labial letters; so do not accept any of them, even though their form and composition<sup>5</sup> resembles Arabic words. For foreigners living among the Arabs often introduced that which was not Arabic, wishing to cause confusions and consternation. The full quadriliteral, in the great majority of cases contains one or more lingual or labial letters, the exceptions being about ten, which are irregular, including: "ʿasjad" (gold or precious gems), "ʿasaṭūs" (a tree), "quḏāḥis" (lion, strong man), "duʿshūqa" (a short woman), "dahdaʿa" (a shepherd's cry to drive animals away), and "zahzaqa"<sup>6</sup> (raucous laughter), and they are all explained in their appropriate places (in this dictionary). Abū Ḥamza ibn Zarʿa said: this is illustrated by what the poet said:—

(Here follows a verse, in which the word "duʿshūqa" occurs, but the text is obscure, and differs in the Baghdad and Tübingen MSS)<sup>7</sup>.

Neither word nor tongue of man has the letter ṭāʿ, except Arabic: and there is no other language with tanwīn except (? text obscure). These expressions have no lingual or labial letter, and are extremely rare: and were it not for the presence of the ʿain and qāf, they would not be acceptable. But ʿain and qāf never occur in a root without fitting in well, because they are the most free and the truest in sound. If they occur together or singly in a word-form, it becomes a good one, because of their purity. If the form is a noun, it must have a sīn or dāl with the ʿAin or qāf, because the dāl softens the harshness of the ṭāʿ, and its persistence; and it is more definite than the tāʿ, and is therefore acceptable. The pronunciation of the sīn is midway between the ṣād and the zāy. Even though a full quadriliteral noun may occur without one or two of the linguals and labials, it cannot be free from them and also from sīn or dāl, no matter what other hard letters<sup>8</sup> may (appear to) oppose that. If you come across any such examples, study Arabic and non-Arabic constructions, such as "qaʿshaj", "faʿthaj", and

<sup>4</sup> These words are not in the *Qāmūs*, and I can see little point in translating all the words used by al-Khalīl as examples.

<sup>5</sup> They are in word-measures which could be paralleled by words which are definitely Arabic, being of the pattern "faʿallal".

<sup>6</sup> The manuscript has "zahraqa", which, containing "r"; obviously an error.

<sup>7</sup> "wa duʿshūqatun fihā nuzaiḥun wa hainamun" (hainamun in Tübingen MS) "taʿashshaftuhā lailan, was taḥṭi julāhinu." The final word is "julāmaqu" in the Tübingen MS. but probably should be "julāmaq" (a bow string).

<sup>8</sup> hard = ṣumma, plural of aṣamm.

"da<sup>c</sup>thaj" <sup>9</sup>, which cannot be ascribed to Arabic, however unimpeachable might be the authority from which they come. I have constructed them, so that true Arabic constructions should be differentiated from what has been interpolated (into the language). As for full quadriliterals without linguals, they are composite onomatopoeic (ḥikāya mu'allafa) such as dahdāq (laughter) and the like. (In this word) the hā<sup>2</sup> and dāl, which resemble each other, are associated with 'ain or qāf. People liked the hā<sup>2</sup> in this sort of onomatopoea because of its softness and amenability; for it is a breathing devoid of roughness. (On the other hand), where the onomatopoeic does contain a lingual letter, it does not matter whether there is a hā<sup>2</sup> or not, as in (?) "ca<sup>c</sup>at" (war clamour) and the like. The onomatopoeic word is not (properly) constructed unless its first letter suits the first letter joined to it, and the final letter in the same way. (text obscure). It almost seems as if people joined "dah" to "dāq", uniting them. And were it not for the resemblance between the two words, the onomatopoea would not be acceptable. For the quadriliteral and the onomatopoea cannot be other than compound or reduplicated. The compound is as I have described to you, and is restricted (to a few words). If "ahnaj" were an onomatopoeic word, it would be acceptable as an Arabic word, even though the hā<sup>2</sup> comes after the 'ain; because things are permissible in onomatopoeic words which are not in others, in order to give a clear indication of meaning. But "ahnaj", as someone has mentioned, is a proper name, unknown to most people, and to those of judgment and knowledge, so it was not admitted, but rejected. As for the reduplicated quadriliteral, it is of the type of "šalla", "salla" and "zalla. For, in word construction, people hold the same view of the attractiveness of the movement (ḥusn al-ḥaraka) as they do in the ring of the onomatopoeic quadriliteral. The reduplicated may be defined as that in which the two closing letters are the same as the two opening letters. This is a form which the Arabs approved, and in it both sound and weak consonants can be used, whether lingual or hard. It is ascribed to the biliteral because it is doubled. You probably realise that in imitating one says "šalšala" of the "lijām" (rein), that is, "šalšala al-lijām" (the rein jangled). If one wishes, one can say "šalla", making the sound only once, lightening it; or if one wishes, one can repeat it once or more, thus: "šalšalšala" stressing as one thinks fit. In the reduplicated quadriliteral conjunction of letters is allowed such as is not permitted otherwise.

<sup>9</sup> Invented words.



Have you not noticed that the if *ḏād*, no less than the *ṣād*, conjoins with *kāf*, and you say "*ḏakka*", it is not considered satisfactory, in a noun or verb, unless accompanied by one or more intervening letters; for example, "*ḏank*" (narrow), "*ḏamk*"<sup>10</sup>, and the like. But it is permissible in the reduplicated quadriliteral, as "*ḏukḏāk*" (short), used of women. In the reduplicated quadriliteral, anything troublesome or cumbersome is permitted as between separated (letters), initials and finals, and so on. (the last sentence is obscure in the text). The Arabs frequently derive reduplicated forms from the stressed trilateral in which the second and third radical are identical, and from the weak trilateral. Do you not notice that they say: "*ṣalla al-lijām*" (the bridle clinked), imperfect *yaṣillu*, verbal noun, *ṣalīla*. When they say that onomatopoeically, they stretch and stress the *lām*. But they lightened it in "*ṣalṣala*". The stress is a lengthening, while the reduplication is a repetition which has the effect of lightening. Such roots cannot be properly conjugated until they are either reduplicated or stressed (that is, the second radical is doubled), as I have described to you. Often they occur in alternative forms, as "*kharra*"<sup>11</sup> *l-jundub*" (the locust rustled) and "*kharḥara l-akḥṭab*" (the woodpecker fluttered), as if they imagined that there was a lengthening in the sound of the locust, and a repetition in the sound of the woodpecker. To illustrate what they derive (in this way) from the weak (hollow) trilateral, there is an example in the poetry of Rub'ā<sup>12</sup>:

"wa law anakhnā jam'ahum, tanakhnakhū".

(and if we were to make their herds kneel, they would kneel).

But in another verse, he says:

"la faḥalnā in sarrahu l-tanawwukhu".

(We will select a stallion, if he kneels easily).

If he had wanted, he could have said in the first verse:

"wa law anakhnā jam'ahum, tanawwakhū".

But he derived "*al-tanawwukhu*" from "*nawwakhnāhā*, fa *tanawwakhāt*", and "*al-tanakhnukh*" from "*anakhnā*": for when "*anākha*" was lightened, the production of its heavy letter (the *khā*?) became satisfactory, as also did the doubling of the two remaining letters, as in "*tanakhnakhnā*", verbal noun "*tanakhnukh*". When the *wāw* was

<sup>10</sup> As far as I can ascertain, this root is only found in the eleventh form verb "*idmākka*", to be verdant.

<sup>11</sup> The text has "*harra*" and "*harḥara*", obvious errors.

<sup>12</sup> Rub'ā ibn al-'ajjāj, a poet of the Ommeyyad period who used *rajaz* metre a good deal.



stressed, it was strengthened, and so it remains fixed in "al-tanawwukh".

Laith said, al-Khalil said: there are twenty-nine letters in Arabic twenty-five of them sound (ṣiḥāḥ), having their various qualities and categories. There are also four "heavy" letters, the wāw, the yā<sup>2</sup>, the soft alif (alif of prolongation) and the hamza. They<sup>13</sup> are called letters (sic!)<sup>14</sup> because they issue from the abdomen, and are not associated with any part of the throat, tongue, or uvula. They rise into the air, so there is no organ to which they can be ascribed except the abdomen. Many used to say that the soft alif, wāw, and yā<sup>2</sup> were "hawā<sup>2</sup>iya", that is to say, that they are in the "hawā<sup>2</sup>" (air). Al-Khalil said: the remotest of all the letters is the 'Ain, and after it the ḥā<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, were it not for the hoarseness of the ḥā<sup>2</sup>, it would be like the 'ain, because its point of pronunciation is near that of the 'ain. Then comes the hā<sup>2</sup>, and were it not for its "ḥatta" (fluency)—and he once called it "hahha" (? impediment), it would resemble the ḥā<sup>2</sup>, because of the nearness of their points of pronunciation. These three letters are in a single group, each one being higher than the previous one. Then come khā<sup>2</sup> and ghain in one group. These are all guttural. Then the qāf and kāf are uvula letters, the kāf being higher. Next come the jīm, shīn, and zāy, in one group: then ṭā<sup>2</sup>, dāl, tā<sup>2</sup>. Then zā dhāl, and thā<sup>2</sup>, each higher than the previous, in one group. After these come fā<sup>2</sup>, bā<sup>2</sup>, and mīm on the lips<sup>15</sup>. Finally, the hamza in the air, is not attributable to any group.

Al-Khalil said: 'ain, ḥā<sup>2</sup>, hā<sup>2</sup>, khā<sup>2</sup> and ghain are gutturals (ḥalaqīya), because they begin in the throat (ḥalaq). Qāf and kāf are uvular because they begin at the uvula. Jīm, shīn, and ḍād are "shajari" because they begin at the "shajr" or side of the mouth, that is, its entrance. Ṣād, sīn, and zāy are "asaliya", because they begin at the "asal" or tip of the tongue, which is the thin part at the end of the tongue. Ṭā<sup>2</sup>, dāl and tā<sup>2</sup> are "qaṭ'iya" because they come from the "qaṭ'" (? cavity) in the upper palate. Zā<sup>2</sup> and zāl are lathawīya or gingival, because their source is the dhalāq, or point of the tongue, limited by the two edges of the point of the tongue. Fā<sup>2</sup>, bā<sup>2</sup>, and mīm are "shafawīya" (labials) (and he once called it

<sup>13</sup> i.e., the weak letters.

<sup>14</sup> In the text "ḥarfan" is surely a mistake for "jawfiyan" or "jawfiyatan", = abdominal.

<sup>15</sup> There must be part missing here, as the letters lām, rā<sup>2</sup> and nūn are not mentioned.

"shafahiya"), because they begin at the lips<sup>16</sup>. Yā<sup>2</sup>, wāw, alif and hamza are "hawā'iya" (air-letters), all in one group, because they rise in the air, no organ being connected with them. Thus, every letter has been ascribed to its position and place of origin. Al-Khalīl also called the mīm "muṭabbiqa", because it shuts the mouth that pronounces it.

This, then, is a picture of the letters of which Arabic is composed, in their (proper) order; and they are 29, namely: 'ain, ḥā<sup>2</sup>, hā<sup>2</sup>, khā<sup>2</sup>, ghain, qāf, kāf, jīm, chīn, ḍād, ṣād, sīn, zāy, ṭā<sup>2</sup>, dāl, ṭā<sup>2</sup>, zā<sup>2</sup>, dhāl, thā<sup>2</sup>, lām, rā<sup>2</sup>, nūn, fā<sup>2</sup>, bā<sup>2</sup>, mīm. These are the sound ones. Also there are wāw, yā<sup>2</sup>, alif and hamza. These 29 form the basis of Arabic.

Laith said, al-Khalīl said: know that the biliteral doubled word runs in two permutations, as radda and darra, shadda and dashsha. The trilateral has six permutations, from which we may give as examples<sup>17</sup> ḍaraba, ḍabara, baraḍa, baḍara, raḍaba, and rabaḍa. The quadriliteral has 24 forms, because it has four letters which are multiplied by the six forms of the trilateral, making 24—of which those in use are recorded (in this work) and those neglected are omitted. An example is 'abqara, 'abraqa, 'aqbara—... and so on<sup>18</sup>. The quinquiliteral word produces 120 permutations, because the number if its five letters is multiplied by the 24 quadriliteral forms, making 120, of which only a minority are in use, the majority being rejected. An example is "safarijal" (quince), safarijal, safajlar... and so on<sup>19</sup>. By the sound trilateral we mean that which consists of three letters not including wāw, yā<sup>2</sup>, or alif, in the root form—for these three are termed weak letters (ḥurūf al-'ilal). Whenever a trilateral word is free from these letters, it is sound trilateral (ṭhulāthī ṣaḥīḥ); for example, ḍaraba, kharaja, dakhala. The weak trilateral (ṭhulāthī mu'atall) is exemplified by ḍariya (to be greedy, fond of), ḍarā (to bleed, artery or wound), ḍirw (hound or terebinth tree): khalā (with a final yā<sup>2</sup>, to cut off a thing), khalā (with final alif, to retire apart), khulū (emptiness, retirement). In these, as you will appreciate, alif, wāw, or yā<sup>2</sup> occurs with the two sound letters.

Al-Khalīl said: in this work, we have begun with the 'ain, taking it in conjunction with the subsequent letters (of the alphabet), in order to exhaust the whole speech of the Arabs, whether straight-

<sup>16</sup> The previous comment applies here also.

<sup>17</sup> The text is corrupt here.

<sup>18</sup> The MSS contain full lists, Tübingen p. 7, Baghdad p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> About 25 possible permutations are given in the MSS, Tübingen, p. 7, Baghdad p. 7.



forward or unusual, beginning with doubled forms, because they are the lightest to the tongue and the simplest to grasp".

Readers will have formed some idea of the plan of the 'Ain from the above introduction. This requires some amplification<sup>20</sup>. Al-Khalil set out to record all the roots in the Arabic language—though not all the words, which is a very different matter. He decided that the best way to achieve this was to take each letter of the alphabet in rotation, and then record all roots containing that letter. There is therefore a chapter or "book" for each letter. This means that the chapters become increasingly shorter as the book progresses. There were two recognised alphabetical orders in Arabic. First there was the alif-bā<sup>2</sup>-jīm order, used chiefly when letters were employed as numbers, and based on the old Semitic alphabet, as in Hebrew and Syriac. The second was a modification of that order, so that letters of the same form, but distinguished by diacritical points, should be grouped together. Thus, after alif and bā<sup>2</sup>, we get tā<sup>2</sup> and thā<sup>2</sup>, which are the same shape as the bā<sup>2</sup>. After jīm, we have hā<sup>2</sup> and khā<sup>2</sup> for the same reason, and after dāl, we have dhāl. This was the more common alphabetical order. Al-Khalil chose to invent his own alphabet because, he said, the alif was an irregular letter. He arranged the letters according to their points of pronunciation, beginning with the throat letters or gutturals, and working upwards and outwards to the labials or lip-letters. There should, therefore be twenty-nine chapters in the book. In fact, there are only twenty-six, since the four weak letters—wāw, yā<sup>2</sup>, alif and hamza—are grouped together in the final—and twenty-sixth—chapter. That al-Khalil really invented this alphabet is to be doubted, if by invention we imply complete originality. He wrote his book in K<sup>h</sup>urāsān, aided by a native of that country, Laith; and K<sup>h</sup>urāsān is the gateway from Persia to India. A comparison of his order with that of the Sanscrit alphabet shows sufficient broad similarity to suggest influence, yet enough divergence in detail to indicate an independent mind moulding borrowed ideas. Apart from minor deviations, concerned chiefly with the peculiarly Arabic letters, the main differences are that al-Khalil puts the aspirates among the gutturals, and the sibilants with the palatals, whereas both these

<sup>20</sup> There are many interesting features of al-Khalil's introduction which I shall not deal with in this book — particularly his phonological ideas. They would merit further study.



come at the end of the Sanscrit alphabet, after the labials and semi-vowels <sup>21</sup>.

Having divided his work into 26 books, one for each letter except the weak letters, which counted as one, he then subdivided each book into chapters (abwāb), according to the number of radicals in the roots, and also separating roots which contained weak letters. Thus, in "Kitāb al-ʿAin" (the first book), we find "bāb al-ṭhunāʾi al-mu-ḍāʿaf" (the chapter of the doubled biliteral, containing roots such as "amma"); "bāb al-ṭhulāṭhi al-ṣaḥiḥ" (the regular trilateral); "bāb al-ṭhulāṭhi al-muʿtall" (trilateral roots with one weak letter, such as waqaʿa); "bāb al-lafif" (the doubly weak, that is, roots with two weak letters, like waʿā and ʾawā); "bāb al-rubāʿi (quadrilaterals), and "bāb al-khumāsī (quinquiliterals). Finally, within these chapters, roots are dealt with anagrammatically, all permutations of any given group of letters being grouped together. For example, "badḍa" occurs with "dabba", while under "alima" we also find "amala" and "lamaʿa". In theory, six permutations are possible with the trilateral, but each entry begins with the formulæ "al-mustaʿmal" (in use), and lists the roots really in use before explaining them in detail. In the quadrilateral and quinquilateral, as al-Khalīl pointed out, only a small proportion are in use.

It is easy to see how cumbersome this system was, and to appreciate why the dictionary did not come into general use. This, as well as the fact that later works superseded it, explains why few manuscripts exist. Yet this did not detract from its fame, and for some time, later lexicographers were so intrigued by the plan, or so much in awe of al-Khalīl's name, that they continued to use it. We may well ask ourselves what really can have induced al-Khalīl to invent a plan which his innate intelligence ought to have caused him to reject. Perhaps the list of his works, and some of the stories we read about him, offer a clue. To codify poetic metres, to write about music and the tuning of instruments—these required a mathematical mind. Al-Khalīl could have been just as sure of including all roots using the normal alphabetical order, without anagramms, and without separating roots according to their length. But permutations are the plaything of the mathematician, and we may suspect that, once having got the idea, al-Khalīl could not get away from it. Everything about his plan was wrong, and it exerted a baneful influence on later lexicography. The novel alphabet was presumably learned by few: it had

<sup>21</sup> See Monier Williams, *Sanscrit Grammar*, Oxford 1877, p. 1ff.

only this in its favour, that it drew attention to phonetic laws, and offered scientific means of detecting foreign words. The separation of roots according to their number of radicals—reminiscent of certain Sanscrit lexicons in which words were classified according to their number of syllables—was an unnecessary complication, but was inevitable once the anagrammatical principle was admitted. The anagrammatical principle was nothing but an irritant. In later ages, it served to foster a false idea that there was some magic in letter-combinations, and that they had basic meanings irrespective of the particular permutation<sup>22</sup>. It is true that dictionaries, like other scientific works, were meant to be learned by heart, and studied orally under an authoritative master, who could trace back a genealogical table for his knowledge going back to the author of the work he was teaching. But al-Khalil's arrangement must have made memorising harder, not easier. It is not surprising that the first Arabic dictionary to be widely used was al-Jauhari's "Ṣaḥāḥ", which was based on a straight-through rhyme arrangement<sup>23</sup>.

I have already stated that al-Khalil, though he planned to include all roots, obviously did not intend to include all words derived from those roots. It is difficult to see what criterion he used in his selection. He did not invariably, for example, omit common words which were familiar in everyday speech. He tells us that "ʿashara" is a number, and includes the well-known word "ḥasan", for example, under their respective roots. Perhaps his aim was to include words which he knew to occur in literature. He frequently quotes examples from religious literature and poetry. He had no regular system for listing derivations under their roots, and might begin an entry with noun, adjective, or verb. A verbal noun might even be mentioned without the verb. So a user of the dictionary, even if he found the required root after much labour, had still the prospect of reading right through the entry to find the word he wanted—and it might not be there at all!

Yet, though we may feel tempted to criticise al-Khalil severely for his confused arrangement, we must pay tribute to him for producing the first Arabic dictionary. The labour involved was considerable, the result magnificent in its way. It achieved its object in drawing attention to the richness of the language, and accustomed scholars to the idea of a complete dictionary. Moreover, we must not expect

<sup>22</sup> See the opening pages of Ibn Jinnī's *Khaṣṣṣ*, Cairo edition I, 1331 A.H., Ibn Jinnī died in 1002 A.D.

<sup>23</sup> See Chapter 6.

a Ninth-century Arab to think like a modern European: we have only to look at the trial and error in Indian and Chinese lexicography to realise that the problem was not so simple as it seems today. The "Kitāb al-'Ain" was designed not for popular use, but for scholars—and it may well be that no scholar of the time would have seen any great virtue in the dictionary arrangement as we know it.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### FURTHER DICTIONARIES IN THE ANAGAMMATICAL ARRANGEMENT OF AL-KHALIL

Al-Khalil had laid the foundations for the study of Arabic philology from internal evidence. He had also devised a means of listing the total vocabulary of the language, and defining it. The unsatisfactory nature of these means, however, not only detracted from the value of his book as a work of reference; it also vitiated the work of the lexicographers who succeeded him and imitated him. Whatever outside influences may or may not have affected al-Khalil, the science of language, like some other Arabic sciences, became very insular, and once someone made a start, it was natural for others to imitate him. The Basran "Khalil-legend" was, no doubt, a potent factor. Yet al-Khalil's method left room for variations: the order of the letters could be altered, on grounds of phonetics or convenience—without sacrificing the anagrammatical method, and the separation of roots according to their lengths. The fact that almost all compilers of dictionaries in the 'Ain method made modifications, both minor and major, suggests that they felt some malaise about the system.

Not for over a hundred years—as far as we are aware—did anyone attempt to rival al-Khalil by writing a complete dictionary of the language. This may have been due to the lack of copies of the 'Ain, or to disappointment with its usefulness. Yet considerable lexicographical work was done during this hiatus. It was the period of the short monograph—of the specialised vocabulary setting forth words needed by authors in a restricted field, in an age when there was a cult of rare words, in both poetry and prose. At the end of this period, Ibn al-Mu'tazz (861-908), the Khalifa's son, was to write the first great book on rhetoric, especially in poetry ("Kitāb al-Badī'"); while in prose, the ornate epistolary style, often attributed to Persian influence, and said to have begun with "'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib"<sup>1</sup> at the end of the Ommeyyad period, was firmly established. The "Fihrist" abounds in the titles of these short monographs: most of them have disappeared, or are hidden away in the corners of various libraries awaiting discovery. In such works, no logical order was

<sup>1</sup> See Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī, *Rasā'il al-Bulaghā*, Cairo 19....

followed save that of the subject-matter. Typical subjects for such restricted vocabularies were those which had an antique flavour associated with the desert Arabs—the horse, and the camel. As many readers will be aware, mention of details of the anatomy and performance of these two animals was almost a *sine qua non* of the *Qaṣīda*—and the pseudo-*qaṣīda*. Another subject was man—his physical characteristics and his qualities of character. Another type of subject is of more philological interest—those ambiguous words, known as “*aḍḍād*” which may have opposite meanings according to the context. There was a substantial literature on these. In addition, short works dealt with rare and difficult expressions encountered in the *Qurān* and the *Ḥadīth*. This was the formative period in the study of the *Ḥadīth*: *Bukhārī* was born in 810 A.D., and Muslim in 817.

We shall deal with vocabularies in a little greater detail in a later chapter<sup>2</sup>, but, as we shall be concerned largely with the general ones, a few further facts about the short monograph will not be out of place here. *Al-Aṣmaʿī* (123/739-217/831) was one of its leading exponents<sup>3</sup>. The enumeration of his works takes twelve lines in the “*Fihrist*”, and among the topics listed are: the Qualities of Man, the Hamza, *Alif Maqṣūra* and *Mamdūda*, Clothing, the Horse, the Camel, the Sheep, Houses, *Aḍḍād*, Weapons, *Nawādir* (rarities), the Palm(-tree), Plants and Trees, Homonyms, Strange Words of the *Ḥadīth*, the Waters of the Arabs, Masculine and Feminine. Although few of these books remain, those that do enable us to form an impression of the usual *modus operandi*. The Book of the Camel (“*Kitāb al-Iḥḍāl*”) has been printed in Leipzig in 1905 in August Hafftner’s “*Texte zur Arabischen Lexicographie*”. It begins with miscellaneous vocabulary concerning the camel, its employment and its habits—the she-camel’s procreation, the names given by the Arab to the camel at every stage of its life. Then come such matters as camel-diseases, gait, and colours. Hafftner’s collection also contains *al-Aṣmaʿī*’s “*Kitāb Kḥalq al-Insān*”. This deal with human beings from birth till death, then enumerates the parts of the body, and then gives general descriptions such as “tall”, “short”, “thin”, and “fat”. A third work by *al-Aṣmaʿī* has been published, “*Kitāb al-Aḍḍād*”<sup>4</sup>. It seems to have no logical order. The words included are supported by the mention of some well-known authority, and by literary quotations. It will be noted that *al-Aṣmaʿī*

<sup>2</sup> Chapter 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Fihrist*, 82, and *Zubaidī*, *Ṭabaqāt*, 183-192.

<sup>4</sup> In August Hafftner, *Drei Quellenwerke über die Aḍḍād*, Beyrouth 1913.



lived to a grand old age, and he was fifty when al-Khalīl died. Some of his works almost certainly preceded "Kitāb al-ʿAin". We have good reason to believe, therefore, that the composition of short lexicographical monographs was not unknown before al-Khalīl's time. He built on these, and produced the first exhaustive vocabulary, the first to which reference might be made without memorising. This last point is very relevant. In the days long before printing, books, being written by hand, were expensive. It was normal to learn them by heart: indeed, the written word was suspect, as copyists were liable to make mistakes. As far as lexicography was concerned, this probably meant that shorter works, dealing with restricted vocabulary areas, were preferred; and the need for a logical arrangement, for reference purposes was slow in being felt. Moreover, the vocabulary served a different purpose from the dictionary, being designed to help the author to find the *mot juste*.

Al-Aṣmaʿī had a strong rival in Abū ʿUbaida (114-210/211 A.H.)<sup>5</sup>. The story of the rivalry between him and al-Aṣmaʿī has often been told<sup>6</sup>. Abū ʿUbaida was discomfited before a wazīr in a trial of merit of the two men's book on the horse. Abū ʿUbaida's was the longer book, but when a live horse was produced, and he was asked to name the parts of the body, his knowledge, in contra-distinction to his rival's, proved purely theoretical. Abū ʿUbaida's book on the horse, "Kitāb al-Kḥail" has been published in Hyderabad in 1958. It opens with introductory remarks on the Jāhiliya Arabs' love of their horses, and Traditions showing the Prophet's high opinion of the horse. Poetry is freely quoted here, as throughout the work. Next, the parts of the horse's body are named, beginning with the ears. Subsequent sections deal with birds which follow horses, horse-calls, blemishes and good points, differences between male and female, names of horses, what the Arabs liked in their horses, colours, descriptions of the gait or movement of horses, and neighing. Finally, several pages are devoted to poetical quotations about the horse, from authors like ʿAlqama, Imruʿl-Qais, Jarīr, Zuhair, and ʿTarafa.

Abū ʿUbaida seems to have had a facility for offending people. He was a Kharijite; his Quranic readings were ignorant and individual. Though unrivalled in his knowledge of Jāhiliya poetry, he had an unreliable memory, and was an atrocious reciter. To this one has to add that he was self confident, had an acid tongue, and

<sup>5</sup> *Fihrist*, 79. Zubaidi, *op. cit.*, 192-195.

<sup>6</sup> For a version in English, see Huart, *Arabic Literature*, London 1903, pp. 142-3.



was an Arab-hater. It is related that when a certain host apologised because his servant had spilled soup on Abū 'Ubaida's clothes, and offered to give him ten new outfits, Abū 'Ubaida said: "Never mind. Your broth won't do any harm, as there's no grease in it!" The "Fihrist" list of his works is longer than that of his rival's, but reads very much like it, some of the titles being identical. There are books dealing with the vocabulary of the Qurān and the Ḥadīth, the camel, the horse, the eagle, the dove, snakes, rare expressions, faults of the Arabs, the virtues of the Persians, and vulgar errors in language. Similar lists might be compiled from other authors of the period, who included Abū Zaid<sup>7</sup>, and Abū 'Ubaid (773-837 A.D.), author of "Gharib al-Muṣannaf".

Leaving aside the question of Abū 'Amr al-Shaibānī's "Kitāb al-Jīm", which we shall have to discuss in Chapter Eight, the second attempt to write an exhaustive dictionary was Ibn Duraid's "Jamhara"<sup>8</sup>. Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Duraid ibn 'Atāhiya ibn Ḥaṣḥm ibn Ḥasan ibn Ḥammāmī (223/837-323/934) belonged to a family of 'Umān (Oman in South-east Arabia), but was brought up in Basra, where he imbibed the philological teaching available. But in 257 there was a negro rising in Basra, and he fled to 'Umān. He wandered in South Arabia for some time, and was able to hear how the desert Arabs spoke Arabic. Then he went to Fārs (Persia), where he compiled the "Jamhara". He dedicated it to the governor, 'Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Mikāl and his son Ismā'īl. He died in Baghdad. He was called "the most learned of poets, and the most poetical of the learned". He was fond of his wine, and al-Azhārī, author of the "Tahdhīb"<sup>9</sup>, having heard of his fame, went to see him, and found him drunk: as a result, he never again went to see him. The list of his works largely resembles those of Al-Aṣma'ī and Abū 'Ubaida already given, consisting mostly of short monographs. His "Kitāb al-ishtiqāq" (Book of derivation) deals with Arab tribal names<sup>10</sup>. He was also a poet of some merit, and in prose he has been considered a forerunner of the "maqāma" writers, Badī' al-Zamān and al-Ḥarīrī. But he is chiefly remembered for his dictionary, "Kitāb al-Jamhara fī l-lughā"<sup>11</sup>. It exists in several manuscripts, none of which tally. Two

<sup>7</sup> *Fihrist*, 81.

<sup>8</sup> *Fihrist*, 91-2; *Qifṭī*, III, 92-100.

<sup>9</sup> See later in this chapter.

<sup>10</sup> Published Cairo.

<sup>11</sup> The pages of the Hyderabad edition will be referred to.

copies are specifically mentioned as having been dictated by the author, one in Persia, and a later one in Baghdad. Al-Qifṭī mentions the best copy as having been made by a certain grammarian by collating existing manuscripts. The work was published in Hyderabad, India, in four volumes between 1345/1926 and 1351/1932. The fourth volume consists solely of an index of the words dealt with in the dictionary, arranged in the modern alphabetical order—a very necessary appendix, as we shall see!

Ibn Duraid composed the dictionary while in Fārs for Ismāʿīl the Governor's son. There is a long introduction which begins by bemoaning the ignorance of the time, and the lack of interest in learning. We will translate the earlier part, and summarise the rest, to allow comparison with al-Khalīl's Introduction to the "ʿAin" <sup>12</sup>:

"When I saw the neglect of literature of the people of this generation, their reluctance to learn, their hostility to what they do not know, their loss of what they have been taught; when I saw the noblest of God's gifts to his creatures is breadth of knowledge, the power to discipline themselves, intelligence with which to restrain their passions; when I saw the mature man of our time, through the domination of stupidity over him, and the stranglehold of ignorance, losing what the past has bequeathed him, circumscribed in his notion of his obligations; so that it is as if he is but the son of his own day, and the offspring of his own hour; when I saw the rising generation, though capable and gifted, preferring pleasures, and turning from paths of virtue: I stored up knowledge, despite my realisation of the benefit of spreading it, and covered it with a curtain; failing to appreciate that sharing it would be a pleasing innovation of lasting effect. I frequented learned men, as one seeking guidance, but (at the same time, outwardly) agreed with ignoramuses, like a stupid man, stingy with his knowledge, lest I should spread it among the wrong people, and place it where its depths would not be plumbed. Then circumstances brought me to Abū l-ʿAbbās Ismāʿīl, son of ʿAbdullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Mikāl (may God strengthen him with his support). I frequented his company, (finding in him) a bright meteor, and outstanding champion, extremely wise, and sure in his knowledge. He elicits wisdom by promoting its possessors, and secures knowledge by bringing its bearers near (him). He attracts literature (to his court) by searching for its sources: not coveting it from pride of possession, yet not scared away from it by the evils of youth. So I poured out

<sup>12</sup> pp. 2ff.



for him my hidden store, and revealed that which I had concealed. I bestowed that with which I had been niggardly, and granted that with which I had been miserly. For I realised that learning had a ready market with him, and that its devotees were privileged. For he stores the precious in its safest places, and entrusts the seed to the soil<sup>13</sup> where it is surest of success. Therefore I prepared this book called "Jamharat al-lughā", and I began it by mentioning the letters of the alphabet which form the root from which all Arab speech branches—they are the pivot of its plan and the origin of its forms. They are responsible for the differentiation between its similar and its dissimilar, its pliable and its recalcitrant. In composing this book, I intend no reflection on our scholars or censure of our predecessors—far be it from me! For I am following and imitating their example, and building on what they began. Al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad wrote the "Kitāb al-ʿAin", and outstripped those who had the same aim, and discomfited those who aspired to his object. For the impartial recognise his superiority, and even the detractors are constrained to acknowledge it. Indeed, all coming after him have depended on him<sup>14</sup>, whether they admit it or not. Unfortunately, however, he made his book difficult, owing to his penetrating understanding and intelligent insight, and owing also to the limitations of the intellects of his age.

We have dictated this book at a time when ignorance is spreading among the people, and incapacity is general, save for some exceptions (which are) like the gleaming stars on the edge of the horizon. So we smoothed the roughness (of the "ʿAin")<sup>15</sup>, and levelled its ruggedness. We have arranged this dictionary<sup>16</sup> according to alphabetical order, as being more conformable to people's knowledge, and more attuned to their ears. The "man in the street's" knowledge of this, like that of the specialist and student, is free from<sup>17</sup> confusion, and able to grasp what is intended. So if anyone consults this book and wants to find a biliteral expression<sup>18</sup>, let him begin with the hamza, then the "bā", if the second letter is a heavy "bā", then the hamza and the tā, and so on to the end of the alphabet. In the trilateral, I have begun with the regular, and whoever wants to know an expression

<sup>13</sup> The text reads "biqā'", plural of "buq'a", meaning depressed ground or a swamp, and, later, an area.

<sup>14</sup> Literally, "followed him".

<sup>15</sup> "sahhala wa'rahu".

<sup>16</sup> "it" in the original.

<sup>17</sup> Literally "far from".

<sup>18</sup> "harf".



of the forms "fa<sup>c</sup>l", "fu<sup>c</sup>l", "fi<sup>c</sup>l", "fu<sup>c</sup>al", etc. . . .<sup>19</sup> should look it up in the various regular trilateral chapters. If anyone wants a quasi-quadriliteral form arising out of the trilateral by the addition of a letter of increase, we have set a chapter apart for it, at the end of the trilateral, which I hope you will find, together with the "mu<sup>c</sup>tall"<sup>21</sup>. For the quadriliteral there are many separate chapters (based on word measures), such as "fa<sup>c</sup>lal", as in "ja<sup>c</sup>far" . . .<sup>22</sup>. Then I have made chapters for the quasi-quadriliteral formed by the addition of letters, such as "faw<sup>c</sup>al", "fa<sup>c</sup>wal", "fay<sup>c</sup>al", "fi<sup>c</sup>yal"<sup>23</sup>. There is no such form as "fi<sup>c</sup>yal" in their speech, unless it be artificial, as al-Khalil says. This is the scheme of the quadriliteral in nouns and adjectives. For the quinquiliteral, we have assigned chapters not designed for easy access—and similarly for the quasi-hexaliteral formed by the addition of a letter of increase. If a word of this kind is hard to find, it should be sought among the "lafif"<sup>24</sup> where I hope it will be found. (Finally) I have collected rare expressions in a chapter called "al-nawādir", owing to the small number of words of this type, such as "qahawbāt", "ṭūbāla" and "qarābalāna"<sup>25</sup>, and the like, omitting the unacceptable, and admitting the accepted the correctness of which has God's blessing . . ."

The above extract from the introduction illustrates how Ibn Duraid adopted and adapted al-Khalil's ideas. What he does not say is that he retained the anagrammatical arrangement; but he criticises al-Khalil's novel alphabet, as politely as possible, and intimates that he has gone back to the normal alphabetical order because both ordinary men and experts are familiar with it. He implies what is an undoubted fact, that the "Ain" was a failure, because what was required was a dictionary which permitted easy reference. Unfortunately his reforms did not go far enough, and he even made some innovations in his plan which only added to the confusion. This can be illustrated by a detailed analysis of his scheme. Ibn Duraid based his dictionary on three fundamental principles. Firstly, he accepted al-Khalil's anagrammatical idea. Secondly, he used the normal letter order. Thirdly, he

<sup>19</sup> Various others are listed in the Arabic text.

<sup>20</sup> "mulḥaq bi l-ṭulāṭi".

<sup>21</sup> Roots containing a weak radical.

<sup>22</sup> "ja<sup>c</sup>far" = a stream. Several other measures are mentioned with examples.

<sup>23</sup> Examples of each are given in the Arabic text.

<sup>24</sup> See previous chapter.

<sup>25</sup> According to the *Qāmūs*, these mean respectively a sharp point, an ewe, and a slow, wide, thick-thighed, small quadruped.

continued the notion of al-Khalīl—and, as we have seen, of some Indian lexicographers—that roots should be grouped according to the number of letters or radicals. But he applied this last principle differently from al-Khalīl. The latter, as we have seen, made the major division of his work individual chapters on the various letters. Within each of these major divisions, he had subdivisions for the biliteral, trilateral, and so on. Ibn Duraid's major division was the number of radicals. Thus his first chapter is that of the regular or sound biliteral <sup>26</sup> (such as "marra" and "ramma"), and in it he deals with all the roots in their two alternative permutations, from "abba" to "hayya". It should be mentioned that in his alphabet, hā<sup>2</sup> comes before yā<sup>2</sup> and after wāw, as in Persian and Urdu, so the last four letters are n, w, h, y. The next chapter is that of the reduplicated quasi-quadrilateral, like "bajbaja" and "jabjaba" <sup>27</sup>. But he reserves a separate short chapter for such roots which contain hamza under the rather inadequate heading of "bāb al-hamza" <sup>28</sup>. Then there is a chapter entitled "the weak (mu<sup>c</sup>tall) biliteral and what branches from it" <sup>29</sup>. By this he means roots which comprise one sound letter plus a hamza and either a yā<sup>c</sup> or a wāw, like "awā" <sup>30</sup>. The major portion of the book now follows, consisting of sound trilateral roots, not counting those with hamza <sup>31</sup>. The first entry is "batathā" (with its permutations "thabata", etc.), and the last "wahaya". It is odd that Ibn Duraid sees no objection to introducing the weak wāw and yā<sup>c</sup> in this section. Next comes a chapter for trilateral roots in which two radicals are identical <sup>32</sup>, whether first and second, first and third, or second and third. In fact, this is largely a repetition of the first chapter of the regular biliteral, but it does find room for roots like "karaka", but not, apparently, such a common one as "qalaqa". This section is followed by one devoted to roots in which the middle radical is a weak letter, and the initial and final are identical <sup>33</sup>; here we find words like "bāb" (door), "tūt" (mulberry) and "nūn" (fish). Next we find a section on the trilateral with one weak letter <sup>34</sup>, with some

<sup>26</sup> Hyderabad edition, I, 13-124.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 124-166.

<sup>28</sup> 167-9.

<sup>29</sup> 169-193.

<sup>30</sup> "awā ilā = to take refuge with.

<sup>31</sup> Vol. I, pp. 193 to end, the whole of Vol. II, and Vol. III as far as p. 184.

<sup>32</sup> III, 184-198.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>34</sup> 199-268.



overlapping with previous chapters; and a strange section on unusual hamzated words<sup>35</sup>. This latter is divided into subsections according to the initial letters. Here the roots are not strictly followed, for under hamza we find derived forms beginning with hamzat al-waṣl. Within these subsections there is no logical order: so here there is, perhaps, some reflection of the Kūfan arrangement as in "Kitāb al-Jīm" which we shall discuss later<sup>36</sup>. Then Ibn Duraid deals with the sound quadriliteral<sup>37</sup>. He takes the letters in pairs, beginning with bā<sup>3</sup> and tā<sup>3</sup>, then lists all roots in which the pair are components, in no particular order. He does the same with bā<sup>3</sup> and ṭhā<sup>3</sup>, bā<sup>3</sup> and jīm, and so on. This section provides the last semblance of convenient arrangement in the work. A bewildering series of short chapters follow, dealing mostly with word-forms, the vocabularies of which are given in haphazard order. It would almost seem as if Ibn Duraid—or some copyist—embodied a number of short lexicographical treatises of the sort common since the time of al-Khalil. Overlapping and repetition increase apace, as the dictionary progresses to its untidy end. The Index volume of the Hyderabad edition shows numerous words which occur three times in the dictionary. There is no point in listing all these later chapters—a selection should suffice. A number of them list quasi-quadriliterals: those in which one letter occurs twice<sup>38</sup>; those which are really derived from triliterals with the addition of a wāw or yā<sup>3</sup>; and many other such types, each being dealt with under its particular word-measure. The quinquiliteral creeps in almost unheralded, save for the cryptic heading: "min al-zawā<sup>3</sup>d"<sup>39</sup> (letters of increase), but by this time nothing can stem the tide of confusion. Among a series of chapters on word-measures, we find others on such subjects as "forms of the verbal noun"<sup>40</sup>, "itbā<sup>3</sup>"<sup>41</sup>, foods<sup>42</sup>, names of the days and months in the Jāhiliya<sup>43</sup>, the metaphorical use of words by poets, including al-Akḥṭal and Farazdaq<sup>44</sup>, foreign words used in Arabic, such as Persian, Nabataean<sup>2</sup>, Syriac

<sup>35</sup> 269-294.

<sup>36</sup> Chapter 8.

<sup>37</sup> III, 295-347.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 348-9

<sup>39</sup> 369.

<sup>40</sup> 427ff.

<sup>41</sup> 429-. This phenomenon occurs in many languages. In English we say "teeny-weeny". In Urdu "bharat-sharat" for "pots and pans" (bharat = a vessel).

<sup>42</sup> III, 446-7.

<sup>43</sup> 489.

<sup>44</sup> 489-494.



and Greek<sup>45</sup>, vocabularies describing horses<sup>46</sup>, women<sup>47</sup>, and an account of various plural measures<sup>48</sup>. An appendix describes how to exhaust all the possible speech of the Arabs, biliteral, trilateral, quadrilateral, and quinquilateral, by drawing a circle and writing groups of three letters round it. Thus by starting at each of the three letters, and moving both clockwise, and anti-clockwise, one can discover the six possible permutations of the trilateral. To form the quadrilateral, one has to add any of the other letters to the various trilateral forms, and quinquilaterals by similarly adding to the quadrilateral. Statistics are given of the number of roots which will be found, some of which will be in use, others neglected. Ibn Duraid closes his dictionary with a note stating that his aim in compiling it was to include the whole of the Arabic language, rejecting the uncouth. He excuses any faults which may crept in on the grounds that he dictated it from memory.

So much for the arrangement of the "Jamhara". Before criticising it further, we must go back to where we left off in the introduction, but we will summarise instead of translating verbatim. The balance of the introduction<sup>49</sup> consists of an essay on phonetics, which owes much to al-Khalil's introduction to the "ʿAin", but is much fuller. It opens with the mention of the letters peculiar to Arabic; and he is only sure of the *zāʾ*, and the *ḥāʾ*, though some say that the latter occurs in Syriac, Hebrew, and Ethiopic<sup>50</sup>. The letters which, though peculiarly Arabic, do occur rarely in other languages are ʿain, *ṣād*, *ḍād*, *qāf*, *ṭāʾ*. This is a curious list, in view of the common expression "*luḡhat al-ḍād*" used of Arabic. Next, Ibn Duraid discusses alternative or intermediate letters which occur in certain dialectal pronunciations. For example, he mentions the pronunciation of *jīm* as a hard "g" in the Yemen. Today it is an important feature of the dialect of Lower Egypt. He refers also to the "p" sound, between "b" and "f", and the pronunciation of "*qāf*" like the Persian "*gāf*". The latter he attributes to the Banī Tamīm of the Nejd; today it is usually heard in Sudan Arabic.

A long and complicated account of letter-classification follows. Several different groupings are given, the first being obviously a modi-

<sup>45</sup> 499-503.

<sup>46</sup> 505.

<sup>47</sup> 507.

<sup>48</sup> 508-513.

<sup>49</sup> I, 4-13.

<sup>50</sup> "al-suryāniya, al-ʿibrāniya wa l-ḥabashiya".

fication of al-Khalīl's<sup>51</sup>. According to this there are seven groups of letters which form two main categories—the mudhlaqa, or lingual, and the muṣmata (muted or hard). The order of the letters is as follows:

Muṣmata: Gutturals; hamza, h, ḥ, ʿain, kh, ghain.

Letters of the furthest part of the mouth, or the lowest part of the tongue; q, k, j, sh.

Letters of the middle or depression of the tongue; s, z, ṣ.

Letters of the nearest part of the tongue; t, ṭ, d.

Nearer still, rising to the upper cavity; ḍ, dh, th, ṫ.

Mudhlaqa: Labials; f, m, b.

Unnamed; r, n, l.

To these are added the alif, which, he says, cannot be vowelised, and wāw and yāʾ, which are described as "of the mouth type also", and as weak letters.

The second classification is attributed to "certain grammarians"<sup>52</sup>, and divides the letters into sixteen groups, the number of letters being increased to thirty by the addition of nasal "n". Here are the groups:

1 h, hamza, alif.	7 s, ṣ, z.	12 f.
2 ʿain, ḥ.	8 n.	13 w, b, m.
3 <u>ghain</u> , <u>kh</u> .	9 l.	14 the nasal "n".
4 q, k.	10 r.	15 z, <u>dh</u> , <u>th</u> .
5 j, <u>sh</u> .	11 t, d, ṭ.	16 ḍ.
6 y.		

Further brief classifications follow<sup>53</sup>. Letters may be mahmūsa (whispered) or majhūra (voiced). The mahmūsa are: h, ḥ, kh, k, s, sh, th, ṣ, t, f. The majhūra are hamza, alif, ʿain, ghain, q, j, y, ḍ, l, n, r, z, d, dh, ṫ, ṣ, b, w, j. Again, letters may be of strength (shidda), such as ṫ, s, and j; or of gentleness (rakhwa), such as h, k, kh, s (note the confusion here), sh, ʿain, ghain, ṣ, ḍ, z, dh, th, f and z. Again, wāw, yāʾ and alif are described as letters of prolongation and softness (ḥurūf al-madd wa l-līn), and the emphatic letters, ṣ, ḍ, ṫ, and z, are termed letters of "iṭbāq" or covering, because, in order to pronounce them, the tongue covers part of the palate. These several

<sup>51</sup> Page 6.

<sup>52</sup> 8.

<sup>53</sup> 8.



classifications have no significance for the arrangement if the dictionary, and they are all taken from previous writers. Their purpose, as Ibn Duraid states, is to enable the reader to reject non-Arabic words<sup>54</sup>. Letters with points of pronunciation near to each other—and more specifically, letters of the same group—do not combine to form an Arabic root, unless they are separated by an intermediate letter of another group. This is understandable, he says, when one realises that in different dialects one guttural, for instance, may take the place of another. If similar letters do combine, the stronger will come first, as in “waral”<sup>55</sup> and “watd”<sup>56</sup>, the r and t being respectively stronger than the l and d.

Ibn Duraid goes on to discuss letters of increase (zawāʿid), a knowledge of which, he says, is necessary for the use of his dictionary<sup>57</sup>. Then he lists the whole range of possible word-measures in Arabic, trilateral, quadrilateral, and quinquilateral, with the varying vowelings admissible<sup>58</sup>. The best roots, he says, are those comprising mutually remote letters. Quadrilaterals invariably contain at least one *ḍhalāqa* letter, save for a few which contain “s”. There is no quinquilateral root without one or two of such letters. Here again he is quoting al-Khalīl. He then mentions the euphonic permutation of letters. He closes the introduction by stating that the majority of Arabic roots are trilateral. Some, he says, sound and look like bilaterals, but they are really trilaterals in which the medial and final radicals are identical, with the medial unvowelled. He is referring, of course, to roots like “marra”. The unvowelled letter is elided into the following one, and they become “one heavy (stressed) letter”, which takes the place of two letters in prosody, for example<sup>59</sup>.

The “Jamhara” is a rambling work of little practical use: only with the help of the fourth (index) volume of the Hyderabad edition can it be effectively consulted, and this doubles the time needed to look up a word. Moreover, as we have said, there is wasteful repetition, some words occurring two or three times. Krenkow<sup>60</sup> has drawn

<sup>54</sup> 9.

<sup>55</sup> A monitor lizard.

<sup>56</sup> a tent-peg.

<sup>57</sup> From bottom of page 9, and the whole of page 10.

<sup>58</sup> 11.

<sup>59</sup> 13.

<sup>60</sup> In *The Beginnings of Arabic Lexicography till the time of Jauhari, with special reference to the work of Ibn Duraid*, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Centenary Supplement, 1924, pp. 25ff.



attention to the incorrect inclusion of words ending in tāʾ marbūʿa under roots as if the tāʾ were a radical. He suggests that as these words are also included under their correct roots, the error is probably intentional, to assist the ignorant reader. A detailed study would be required to analyze the double entries in the "Jamhara". But no explanation can hide the fact that it is the most confused Arabic dictionary ever written. We may object to al-Khalil's system, but at any rate it is consistent. From the "Jamhara" as we have it, we might almost imagine that Ibn Duraid had written a number of lexicographical works, some in dictionary—, some in vocabulary-form, often overlapping each other, and then strung them together hastily as if they formed a single planned dictionary. Of course, the work is a mine of linguistic information. For example, as Krenkow points out, it gives many Persian and other foreign words correctly; also plant and agricultural terms.

To sum up, Ibn Duraid realised that al-Khalil's work had been spoiled by his very originality—by his pre-occupation with phonetic theories. He made one step forward, by using the normal alphabetical order of the letters, but was otherwise led astray by his reluctance to abandon the anagrammatic-permutative system, and by his own untidy mind. The only other explanation would be that some later hand put together a number of Ibn Duraid's lexicographical works and forged the introduction.

Unfortunately the one lesson which Ibn Duraid had taught on dictionary arrangement—the necessity to adhere to the familiar alphabet—was not learned for a hundred years. In the Fourth/Tenth century, al-Khalil's system was continued both in the East (by al-Azharī and the Ṣāḥib ibn ʿAbbād), and in the West (by al-Qālī and al-Zubaidī). It had its final advocate in Spain in Ibn Sīda in the Eleventh Century. Two new systems arose to compete with it: the modern alphabetical order of the first letter, used by Ibn Fāris, and the rhyme order (of the last letter) of al-Jauharī. Both these appeared in the second half of the Tenth Century of our era. We shall be concerned with these in succeeding chapters: meanwhile we must follow the vicissitudes of the Khalil system.

Al-Azharī (282/895-370/981)<sup>61</sup> Abū Maṣṣūr Muḥammad Abū Aḥmad ibn al-Azhar al-Azharī al-Harawī was a native of Herat in Khurāsān, but moved to Baghdad, where he studied under several capable philologists, the best-known of whom was Niftawaih. He was

<sup>61</sup> The birth year is as given in Bughya, Bulgha, and Ibn Khallikān. Yāqūt gives 302.

skilled in the religious sciences, and was a Shāfiʿite, but philology became his first love. He travelled among tribes of Arabia to complete his studies, but was taken prisoner when the Carmathians attacked a pilgrimage caravan<sup>62</sup>. He was held captive for two winters, travelling from place to place with nomads of a tribe who rarely "mispronounced a word or committed a gross mistake in language". He was to incorporate many of the expressions which he heard thus in his dictionary. He spent the latter part of his life in his native Herat, writing his dictionary which was entitled "al-Taḥdhīb fi l-lughā", a large work said to have been in ten volumes. Others of his works are either philological or religious. His "Ḡharīb al-alfāz" was described by Ibn Khallikān<sup>63</sup> as a major authority for obscure words in "Fiqh".

The "Taḥdhīb" exists in fragmentary manuscripts in Cairo, Istanbul, the Hedjaz, and the British Museum. No single manuscripts of the whole work has yet been discovered<sup>64</sup>. K. V. Zettersteen has edited a portion, consisting of the long introduction, and the earlier pages of the dictionary proper<sup>65</sup>. So, even in the absence of the full work, the plan is quite clear. Al-Khalil's phonetic alphabet is followed exactly, as well as his anagrammatical method. Similarly biliterals come before trilaterals and quadrilaterals. It would appear that al-Azharī relied closely on the ʿAin, but expanded his dictionary by more quotations in support of his definitions. The "Taḥdhīb" is important as a source of the "Lisān al-ʿArab"<sup>66</sup>. But the Introduction is also of special interest, as it includes a critical history of Arabic lexicography up to the author's time. It is well worth summarising.

"Lughā", al-Azharī says, is an aid to the study of the Qurān. Those who first heard the Qurān did not need to be taught the meaning of its language. But later generations went astray through misunderstandings. This is not surprising, since Arabic is a rich language which only the Prophet knew in full. Al-Azharī says that he has consulted books, including "the ʿAin ascribed to al-Khalil" (sic), and "those in our time" who followed his example, and has discovered errors which others cannot recognise. He will therefore show correct Arabic in his book, by putting right the errors of previous books—hence the title "Taḥdhīb". He has been preoccupied with "lughā" from his youth

<sup>62</sup> Ibn Khallikān, III, 48. This happened in 311/923.

<sup>63</sup> Ibn Khallikān, III, 49.

<sup>64</sup> Darwish, pp. 26-9.

<sup>65</sup> See K. V. Zettersteen, *Aus dem Taḥdhīb al-lughā al-Azharī's in Le Monde Oriental*, 1920, Vol. XIV, pp. 1-106.

<sup>66</sup> See Chapter 7.



until the age of seventy, and his knowledge of Arabic has been increased by a period of captivity among nomad Arabs. They spoke excellent Arabic, free from faults, and he has incorporated their rare and obscure expressions in his dictionary.

Next he gives an account of previous lexicographers, beginning first with the reliable ones on which he has based his book <sup>67</sup>. Many famous names are mentioned, but it is significant that none of them are authors of large-scale dictionaries which are now extant. He does, however, refer to a large book on "*luḡa*", arranged in alphabetical order beginning with the letter *jīm*, by his fellow-countryman. Abū Amr *Shamir ibn Ḥamdawaih al-Harawī*. The only copy was destroyed by flood after the author's death, but al-Azhari had managed to see some of the early pages. Though overloaded by supporting quotations from poetry, the *Qurān*, and the *Ḥadīth*, it was absolutely outstanding (*ʿAlā ghāyat al-kamāl*) and was never rivalled, for richness, before or since <sup>68</sup>.

After this comes a section on unreliable lexicographers. "Let us now mention men who were branded with the brand of knowledge and philology, and compiled books, which they crammed with both the sound and the unsound, and stuffed with corruptions and copyists' errors." The first culprit is *Laith*, "who foisted on al-Khalīl the writing of the "*Kitāb al-ʿAin*" in toto, in order to find a ready market for it under his name". (*li yunfiqahu bi-smihi*) Al-Azhari claims to have authoritative information that al-Khalīl died without completing it, and that where it says "*qāla l-Khalīl*", the work is *Laith's*, but where it says "*saʿaltu l-Khalīl*" or "*akhbaranī l-Khalīl*", it is al-Khalīl's <sup>69</sup>. He intimates that he has indicated the errors of the "*ʿAin*" in his dictionary. But he is not absolutely dogmatic, for he warns the reader that when he says of a word, "I have not found it elsewhere (than in the "*ʿAin*")", the reader should check it in the works of the reliable lexicographers whom he has listed, and if he finds it confirmed, then the doubt is ended <sup>70</sup>. After mentioning a few other "unreliables", including al-Jāhiz, al-Azhari attacks Ibn Duraid strongly. He accuses him of falsifying and adding <sup>71</sup> words. He once visited him in Baghdad and found him so drunk that he could scarcely speak. He had read

<sup>67</sup> Zettersteen, *op. cit.*, pp. 8ff.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-4. This work will be discussed again in Ch. 8, in connection with Abū ʿAmr al-Shaibānī's *Kitāb al-Jīm*.

<sup>69</sup> p. 27.

<sup>70</sup> 28.

<sup>71</sup> 30. Presumably "tawīd" in the text is an error for "tazwīd" or "tazyīd".



the "Jamhara" but found in it no traces of penetrating knowledge, but came across many expressions twisted from their correct form. However, it is in discussing an obscure author, al-Buṣṭī al-Khāra-zanji, author of "Takmilat al-ʿAin" (a completion of "Kitāb al-ʿAin"), that he is most severe. This man gave a long list of the authorities he had consulted, but he had referred to them only in the written texts, not orally from the authors themselves or their pupils. The resultant errors are exemplified<sup>72</sup>, and in many cases, as one might expect, only wrong vowelling is involved. Al-Azhārī makes it clear that he can only accept oral transmission in "luḡha", thus placing it on a par with the science of ḥadīth.

The last part of the introduction is taken almost entirely from the introduction to the ʿAin—with due acknowledgement. It explains why the letters ʿairf was taken as the first letter, and then classifies roots according to the number of their radicals. Al-Azhārī explains the missing letter from "fam" and "yad" in almost identical terms as al-Khalīl. Finally, he classifies the letters phonetically. The actual extract from the dictionary given by Zettersteen consist of biliteral roots from ʿAin-ḥāʿ to ʿAin-thāʿ. They are described as "muḍāʿaf", that is, doubled. If this section is typical of whole work, it may fairly be described as substantially the "ʿAin", expanded by more numerous examples, especially poetical quotations.

The "Tahdhīb" is, no doubt, an able expansion of the "ʿAin", and it is a pity that no complete copy has been found. Indeed, this would be a major calamity, were not Ibn Sīda's "Muḥkam", and, still more, the "Lisān al-ʿArab", preserved. Nevertheless, one could have wished that al-Azhārī had been less conceited. We are left with the lurking suspicion that the main idea of his introduction was to discredit all previous lexicographers who had written large-scale dictionaries, which were still available, the more to magnify his own effort. Yet such was the magic of the name Khalīl, that, if his dictionary must be attacked, it had to be under another author, that is, al-Laith. In any case, if "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery", al-Azhārī's blind adherence to the arrangement of the "ʿAin" is a high tribute to it. Had al-Azhārī thought for himself, he might have modified that arrangement, be it ever so little, like the drunkard Ibn Duraid he so despised-

With al-Qālī, lexicography spread to Spain, which remained the last stronghold of al-Khalīl's method long after it had become obsolete

<sup>72</sup> 33-38.

in the East. When the Ommeyyads fell in the East, one of the family, 'Abd al-Rahmān, fled to Spain, where he was accepted as ruler. One of his descendents, 'Abd al-Rahmān III, took the title of *Khalifa*, and he and his successors sought to make Qurtuba (Cordoba) in every way a worthy seat of the Caliphate, by patronising art and learning<sup>73</sup>. It is a sign of the universality of Islamic culture that an Armenian scholar in Arabic philology, having failed to make his mark in Baghdad, went to Spain, and died there after achieving fame and fortune, and compiled a great Arabic dictionary under royal patronage. For such was al-Qālī's career. Ismā'il ibn Qāsim ibn 'Aidhūn Abū 'Alī, known as al-Qālī in the East, but as al-Baghdādī in the West (288/901-356/967)<sup>74</sup> was born in Manāzgird in Armenia<sup>75</sup>. At the age of fifteen<sup>76</sup> he set out for Baghdad in search of learning, and found himself on the way in company of a number of people from Qālī-Qalā, also in Armenia. He noticed that these people were honoured wherever they went, possibly because they came from a frontier town<sup>77</sup>, so he adopted the name of al-Qālī, hoping, as he says, that it would profit him with learned men; but he actually gained nothing from it. He stayed twenty-five years in Baghdad, also paying a visit to Mosul. He studied the Qurān, the Ḥadīth, and ancient Arabic poetry, as well as lexicography, his teachers in the latter being Ibn Duraid, Ibn al-Anbārī, Ibn Niftawaih, al-Zajjāj and Ibn Durustawaih. With the last-named, he made an exhaustive and authoritative study of Sībawaihi's Grammar. He reached a high level in his studies: according to Ibn Khallikān, "he surpassed all his contemporaries by his extensive acquaintance with philology, poetry, and the grammatical doctrines established by the learned of Basra"<sup>78</sup>. His skill did not, however, gain him the recognition which he deserved. So reduced to poverty did he become, that he had to sell his most treasured possession—a manuscript of Ibn Duraid's "Jamhara"<sup>79</sup>.

<sup>73</sup> For a readable account of Cordoba during this period, see S. Lane-Poole, *The Moors in Spain*, London, 7th. edition, 1897.

<sup>74</sup> An alternative birth-date, 280/893-4, is mentioned but is unlikely. See *Kāfi al-Kitāb al-Bārī*, British Museum facsimile edition, edited A. S. Fulton, 1933, page 2 of the introduction.

<sup>75</sup> For accounts of al-Qālī, see Ibn Khallikān, I, 210-212; Buḡya, 198; Fulton, *op. cit.*, Introduction, pp. 1-9; Qifṭī, I, 204-9; Zubaidī, 202-5; Darwīsh, 30-34; and Ibn Khair al-Ishbīlī, *Fihrist*, 354-5. The last-named is useful for Spanish works, and was published in Saragossa in 1894, edited F. Codena and J. Ribera.

<sup>76</sup> In 303. See *Buḡya*, 198.

<sup>77</sup> Qifṭī, I, 204.

<sup>78</sup> I, 209-210.

<sup>79</sup> Fulton, 2.



He had previously refused 300 mithqāls for it, but now accepted forty. Before handing it over to the purchaser, he wrote on the fly-leaf. "My friend for twenty years, yet I sold it". When the buyer read this, he was so moved that he returned the book, together with a present of 40 dinārs. Disappointed, al-Qālī left Baghdad at the age of forty, to seek his fortune in the Spain of 'Abd al-Raḥmān (III) al-Nāṣir. He reached Cordoba in 330 A.H.<sup>80</sup> While still some distance from the city, he was met by an escort of notables sent by command of the Caliph's son, al-Ḥakam. On the way, they discussed learned matters with their guest, and al-Qālī had the misfortune to make a misquotation. One member of the escort, Ibn Rifā'a of Elvira, deserted the party in disgust, not wishing to take part in the honouring of one so unworthy. This was not the only "brick dropped" by al-Qālī in his early days in Andalusia. In 338/949 the Khalifa received envoys sent by the Byzantine Emperor. An orator was commissioned to extol the glories of Islam before the distinguished guests. According to one story, our lexicographer was selected, but, overpowered by the splendour of the occasion, he became tongue-tied. A more usual version of the story states that the selected orator faltered and fainted, and that al-Qālī was called on to fill the breach on the spur of the moment, and failed equally miserably. The Andalusian who took over where he had left off—with great success—did not fail to take the opportunity to sneer at the "foreigner"<sup>81</sup>. Despite these incidents, however, al-Qālī obtained in Spain the fame and patronage which Baghdad had denied him. He was given charge of the great mosque of al-Zahrā', and was later made chief judge of Cordoba. Al-Ḥakam, who succeeded his father as Khalifa, was a lover of culture, and built up a library of 400,000 volumes. He it was who paid a huge sum of money to have an advance copy sent him from Baghdad of the "Kitāb al-Aghānī". He it was who encouraged al-Qālī to compile his dictionary. Al-Qālī died in Cordoba in 356/967.

The list of al-Qālī's works reads like those of many previous lexicographers. There is first of all his great dictionary, "al-Kitāb al-bārī' fī l-lughā" (The excellent book on lexicography); then his "Kitāb al-Amālī"<sup>82</sup>, a philological and literary miscellany. He also wrote a series of monographs on various philological matters with familiar titles—"The Book of Rarieties", "Alif Maqṣūr and Mamdūd", "Camels

<sup>80</sup> *Bughya*, 198.

<sup>81</sup> *Fulton*, 4-5.

<sup>82</sup> Published Cairo 1344/1926, 2 vols. There is also a Būlāq edition of 1324/1906.



and their breeding", and "Horses and their marks". Finally, there is a commentary on the Mu'allaqāt. Of these works, only the first three are known to have survived. His "Bāri" exists in incomplete manuscripts in the British Museum<sup>83</sup>, and the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris<sup>84</sup>, which cover different areas of the work, though overlapping in places. The British Museum manuscript has been reproduced in facsimile, edited by A. S. Fulton, and from it we are able to gain a fairly accurate impression of the work. Fulton describes it<sup>85</sup> as "in its day the most comprehensive Arabic lexicon that had yet appeared". This is, perhaps, an overstatement, in view of al-Azhari's "Tahdhīb". It consisted of 164 parts, totalling 4446 leaves<sup>86</sup>, and exceeding the "ʿAin" by 5683 words<sup>87</sup>. A Darwish describes it as longwinded<sup>88</sup>. According to him, al-Qālī gives synonymes in definition of words, and then goes on to illustrate the synonyms by poetical quotations. "It appears", he says, "that al-Qālī's personality as a literateur dominated his personality as a philologist, and this compelled him to be longwinded and verbose as he was in the "Kitāb al-Amālī", although the subjects of the two books were completely different". This is doubtless true, but the sort of digressions referred to are common in Arabic lexicography. Al-Qiftī tells us<sup>89</sup> that al-Qālī began his dictionary in 339, and then shelved it, owing to illness and the pressure of other work. On the Khalifa's order, he resumed it in 349. He continued the composition of it, and then began to have it fair-copied. He had completed the chapters dealing with the letters hamza, ḥāʾ and ʿain when he fell ill in 355. He died in the following year. Al-Zubaidī tells us<sup>90</sup> that he had a remarkable memory, and dictated all his books by heart. After his death, the copying of the work was continued by scribes from the scraps of paper which he left<sup>91</sup>.

There is no introduction to the "Bāri" extant, but the work is clearly modelled on the "ʿAin". The arrangement of roots is anagrammatical; roots with weak letters are treated separately; roots are separated according to the number of radicals; and a phonetic alphabet

<sup>83</sup> Or. 9811.

<sup>84</sup> De Slane's Catalogue No. 4235.

<sup>85</sup> Page 1.

<sup>86</sup> Ibn Khair, p. 355. 5,000 according to Qiftī, vol. I, 206.

<sup>87</sup> Fulton, 7.

<sup>88</sup> 34.

<sup>89</sup> I, 209.

<sup>90</sup> 203.

<sup>91</sup> Ibn Khair, 355.

similar to al-Khalīl's is used. Owing to the lack of a complete manuscript, the actual letter order is not absolutely certain in every detail, but it appears to be as follows, as compared with the "cAin" <sup>92</sup>:

al-Qālī: h, ḥ, ʿ, kh, gh, q, k, ḍ, j, sh, l, r, n,

al-Khalīl: ʿ, ḥ, h, kh, gh, q, k, j, sh, ḍ, ṣ, s, z,

al-Qālī: ṭ, d, t, ṣ, z, s, z, dh, th, f, b, m,

al-Khalīl: ṭ, d, t, z, dh, th, r, l, n, f, b, m,

al-Qālī: w, alif, y.

al-Khalīl: w, alif, y.

Thus, al-Qālī, like al-Khalīl, begins with the gutturals, and ends with the labials and semi-vowels, but he puts the remaining letter-groups in a different order, and also varies the letter order within these groups. He was obviously no slavish imitator, but a man who could think for himself. A. S. Fulton points out that we have no "manuscript evidence as to the position of the hamza. Al-Qālī must have dealt with it either at the beginning of the alphabet, or in a special chapter at the end" <sup>93</sup>. From the statement of al-Qifṭī quoted above—which al-Qifṭī, incidentally, took from al-Qālī's son—it would seem that the hamza formed the first chapter. It was therefore the first guttural and the first letter of his phonetic alphabet. Naturally, it would not then occur in any of the subsequent chapters. Like al-Khalīl, al-Qālī divided each letter-chapter into sections, according to the number of letters in the roots: but unlike his model, he included the lafif or doubly weak with the maʿtall. He also included a special section for miscellaneous expressions, "awshāb", which included various cries and onomatopoeic words. His divisions are: 1) the biliteral; 2) the sound trilateral; 3) the weak trilateral; 4) "awshāb"; 5) Quadri- and quinquiliterals.

Thus, however much al-Qālī may have treasured his copy of the "Jamhara", he was familiar with the "cAin", and introduced its system to Spain. His pupil, al-Zubaidī, was to compile an abridgement of the "cAin".

Dictionaries, like large-scale works in other genres of Arabic literature, frequently gave rise to modified and improved versions, commentaries, and abridgements. The standard method of abridgement was selective shortening rather than summarising. The wording of the original was largely retained, but certain parts were omitted al-

<sup>92</sup> See Fulton, 8, and Darwīsh 32.

<sup>93</sup> 8.



together. With dictionaries, it was normal to omit the "shawāhid"; that is, the literary quotations illustrating the use and meanings of words. In addition, the authority for any entry, referring it back to some famous philologist, might be left out. It is no part of our plan to describe the many modified and shortened versions which were made of many of the great Arabic lexicons. Those interested will find most of them listed in the second part of Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān's "Bulgha" <sup>94</sup> under the entries for the parent works. The "Mukhtaṣar al-ʿAin" of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Zubaidī <sup>95</sup> (died 379/989, aged about 63), however, deserves mention both on account of its merits, and because of the author's position. Ibn Khallikān calls him "the ablest grammarian and the most learned philologist of his age". He was born in Seville, but moved to Cordoba, doubtless in search of royal patronage. This he readily obtained, being appointed tutor to Hishām, son of al-Ḥakam, and grandson of the Khalīfa ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III. He became a pupil of al-Qālī, to whom he may have owed his interest in the "ʿAin". The Khalīfa appointed him judge of Cordoba, and later Chief of Police. Later in life, al-Qiftī tells us that he wished to return to his native Seville, but al-Ḥakam would not let him. This led him to send a short poem home to one of his servant-girls, saying:

"Do not think that I have become resigned (to remaining away from home),

Save as a dead (soldier) is resigned to the fray".

He was quite an able poet, since his verses were free from the pedantry which was associated with lexicographers.

Al-Zubaidī has been universally praised for his abridgement of the "ʿAin", which, however, has not yet been published <sup>96</sup>. Among those to speak well of it were Ibn Khallikān, Yāqūt and al-Qiftī. Al-Suyūṭī and Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān mention that many preferred it to the original work. A. Darwīsh <sup>97</sup> refers to al-Zubaidī's modesty in disclaiming any originality, even in the title. He set out to reduce the "ʿAin" to manageable proportions by eliminating the shawāhid and the reference to authorities. Darwīsh thinks that he might have retained some of the shawāhid. Al-Zubaidī also corrected some of the errors of the

<sup>94</sup> Istanbul 1296/1879.

<sup>95</sup> For biographical material, see Ibn Khallikān, III, 83-5; Yāqūt, VI, 518-522; the Introduction to al-Zubaidī's *Ṭabaqāt*, Cairo 1954; *Bughya*, 34; Darwīsh, 35-40; Qiftī, III, 108-9; Ibn Khair, 350.

<sup>96</sup> Escorial MS, 517.

<sup>97</sup> 39.



"*ʿAin*" put some of the entries in their correct places, and inserted some words which had been omitted. He adhered to the plan of the "*ʿAin*", and took many of his definitions verbatim from it.

He wrote a number of shorter philological and grammatical works: for example, a book on "vulgar errors", and a highly-esteemed grammar called "*al-Wāḍiḥ*". His "*Kitāb al-Istidrāk*"<sup>98</sup> deals with word forms, and corrects, explains, and expands a short part of Sibawaihi's "*Kitāb*". Lastly, his "*Ṭabaqāt al-Nahawiyīn wa l-lughawiyīn*" (Categories of Grammarians and Lexicographers) is a collection of short biographies. It is a major source-book for the study of Arabic lexicography, and has been frequently referred-to in the present study<sup>99</sup>. In it, he describes the lives and works of previous scholars, classifying them according to the places in which they worked, and the methods which they followed; and sketching what might be termed a genealogical table of scholarship, showing from whom each philologist learned, and whom he taught. The Arabs used the "*Ṭabaqāt*" analysis in other fields of literary criticism, notably poetry and the *sharīʿa*. Al-Zubaidī deals with the following categories: Basran grammarians, 10 categories; Kufan, 6; Basran lexicographers, 7 categories, Kufan, 5; Egyptian grammarians and lexicographers, 3 categories; those of Qairawān, 4; those of Spain, 5. The work contains valuable information; the anecdotes, whether true or fabricated, are usually interesting, and sometimes amusing. The omissions are occasionally annoying. Al-Khalīl is classed as a grammarian, not a lexicographer; the five pages devoted to him<sup>100</sup> contain only anecdotes and considerable snippets of his undistinguished poetry.

Al-Zubaidī has been discussed at some length as a typical, though rather superior, abridger; for his continuation of the Khalīl method in Spain; and as the author of the "*Ṭabaqāt*". But while he was working in Spain, the Khalīl tradition was being maintained in the East by the Ṣāhib ibn ʿAbbād, author of the "*Muḥīṭ*" dictionary. Little is known of this work, despite the author's fame, and Darwish fails to mention it among the anagrammatical dictionaries—he calls Ibn Sīda's "*Muḥkam*" the fifth, while it is really the sixth, the "*Muḥīṭ*" being the fifth. The author, Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAbbād ibn ʿAbbās ibn ʿAbbād ibn Aḥmad ibn Idrīs al-Ṭālaqānī Abū l-Qāsim (326/938-

<sup>98</sup> *II Kitāb al-Istidrāk di Abū Bakr az-Zubaidi*, ed. I. Guidi, Rome 1890.

<sup>99</sup> ed. Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo 1954.

<sup>100</sup> 43-47.

385/995)<sup>101</sup>, is perhaps the supreme example in Arabic literary history of the man of affairs with scholarly tastes, knowledge both wide and deep in many fields, and uncommon literary ability. His various writings—a large proportion of which have been lost—cover lexicography, literary criticisms, religion and morals, medicine, history and the technique of poetry. He himself was a poet, and also a leading exponent of the epistolary art with its ornate prose style. A collection of his *risālas* has been published<sup>102</sup>. At least one Persian title occurs in the list of his works. Yet all this literary effort was, after all, a mere side-line, as he was by profession a statesman. His father had been prime minister or “wazīr” to Buwaihid princes, first Rukn al-Daula of Rai, then ‘Aḍud al-Daula of Fārs. He himself was first wazīr to Mu‘ayyid al-Daula, then to his brother Fakhr al-Daula, in Isfahān and Rai<sup>103</sup>. He had been a constant companion of Mu‘ayyid al-Daula before the latter succeeded to the throne; and the term “*Ṣāhib*” (Companion) was so often used of him in common speech, that it afterwards became the regular courtesy title of wazīrs.

The biographers all find it difficult to speak of Ibn ‘Abbād, whether as man, minister, or savant, without superlatives. To Ibn Khallikān<sup>104</sup> he was “the pearl of his time and the wonder of his age” for his talents, his virtues, and his generosity. Al-Tha‘ālabī, in “*Yatīmat al-Dahr*”<sup>105</sup>, states: “My words aspire in vain to attain a height which may accord with even the lowest degree of his merits and glory”. Many poets eulogised him in more than formal terms. The notion of one excelling in letters as well as government seems to have impressed his contemporaries as much as it does us today. He had that highly-esteemed Arab facility for rapid repartee. When someone presented him with a memorandum which contained phrases obviously culled from his *risālas*, he wrote at the bottom: “This our property has been returned to us”. We are told that he studied under the lexicographer Ibn Fāris, whom we shall discuss in Chapter 8. But when he came to compile a dictionary, he preferred al-Khalīl’s method to that used by his master in the “*Mujmal*” and the “*Maqāyīs*”—that is, the modern dictionary arrangement. He must have collected a large private library; for when

<sup>101</sup> See Sheikh Muhammad Hasan al-Yaseen, *Al-Sahib ibn ‘Abbad* — in Arabic but there is also an English title page as given — Baghdad 1957. Also, Ibn Khallikān I, 212-217; Qiftī, I, 201-203; *Bughya* 186-7.

<sup>102</sup> ed. M. Hasan al-Yaseen, 1948.

<sup>103</sup> See Lane-Poole, *Muhammadan Dynasties*, Paris 1925, pp. 141-143.

<sup>104</sup> I, 212.

<sup>105</sup> Quoted by Ibn Khallikān, I, 214.



the Sāmānid prince of Transoxiana wrote to him confidentially trying to lure him to his service from that of the Buwaihids, one of the excuses he used for refusing was that 400 camels would be required for transporting his books alone. His funeral occasioned a show of mourning which would have been more in keeping for a prince than for a minister. The gates of Rai were closed, and the whole population, including the prince, turned out to pay their respects, before his body was removed to Isfahān for burial.

There has long been a certain mystery surrounding Ibn ʿAbbād's dictionary, "*al-Muḥīṭ fī l-lughā*". Incidentally, he seems to have started the habit of using metaphorical terms about the sea in dictionary titles—unless we are to interpret the word "*muḥīṭ*" in its literal sense of "comprising", or "all-embracing", from "*aḥāṭa*", to encompass. Most authorities state that the work was in seven volumes<sup>106</sup>, but al-Suyūṭī<sup>107</sup> said ten. All agreed that it contained an exceedingly large vocabulary not supported by sufficient examples. Ibn *Khallikām* states that it was arranged in alphabetical order—an ambiguous, if not misleading, statement. Until recently, the only manuscript whose existence was widely known was of a section only of the work—272 pages—in *Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriya* in Cairo. Now, thanks to the researches of Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Yāsīn<sup>108</sup>, we know of other manuscript portions, and a copy of the whole work in the Iraq Museum in Baghdad. (*al-Maṭḥaf al-ʿIrāqī*). It consists of two volume totalling 459 pages. Ibn ʿAbbād employs the anagrammatical method of al-Khalīl, with exactly the same phonetic alphabet. Like al-Khalīl, he begins each chapter with biliterals, and then passes on to trilaterals, quadrilaterals, and quinquilaterals. The accusation of lack of examples is justified, but the author's aim was apparently to give an exhaustive vocabulary in a small space. Thus the work is a fore-runner of al-Firūzābādī's "*Qāmūs*", to which, however, it is inferior, because of its inconvenient arrangement.

It is fitting that the dying embers of the *Khalīl* system should flare up for the last time in Spain. And the architect of the final anagrammatical-phonetic dictionary, Ibn Sīda, was in every way worthy to wind-up what al-Khalīl had started. He was a scholar of gigantic talent and industry. He was born in Murcia, but went to Denia,

<sup>106</sup> *Qifṭī*, I, 201; Ibn *Khallikām*, I, 214.

<sup>107</sup> *Bughya*, 197.

<sup>108</sup> See note 101.



where he died in 458/1066 aged about sixty<sup>100</sup>. A blind man, the son of a blind father who had studied under al-Zubaidī, we are told by Ibn Khallikān that he was highly distinguished in those portions of the sciences of lexicography and grammar as were preserved by oral transmission. His memory was phenomenal. Al-Qiftī tells us<sup>110</sup> that when a certain scholar arrived in Denia to teach the book "Gharīb al-Muṣannaf"<sup>111</sup>, he asked for someone to read it while he explained it. He was brought a blind man who recited it as perfectly as if he had been reading it—that man was Ibn Sīdā. He was a poet of no mean talent. We are told that he was patronised by a certain prince of Denia until the latter's death, but was harshly treated by his successor. So he set out, and travelled to the courts of other Muslim princes, of whom there were a number in Spain at this time. But he earned his recall to Denia by a poem which he addressed to the new prince. Nevertheless, lexicography was his real métier. Apart from shorter works, none of which are now available, he set himself the task of compiling an exhaustive reference dictionary on the Khalīl plan which should pay special attention to word forms and derivations. This was "al-Muḥkam wa l-muḥīṭ al-aʿẓam" [the greatest systematic and exhaustive (dictionary)]. This is commonly known as the "Muḥkam". Having completed this, he paralleled it by a large-scale classified vocabulary under subject headings, for the use of writers, the "Mukhaṣṣaṣ" (or categorised)<sup>112</sup>. As if this were not sufficient, he also composed a commentary on Ibn al-Sikkīt's "Iṣlāḥ al-Manṭiq", one on the "Ḥamāsa" in ten volumes, a book on rhyme, and several other works.

It is a mystery why Ibn Sīdā should have clung to the Khalīl method in the "Muḥkam", at a time when the rhyme order had been effectively demonstrated by al-Jauharī and the modern dictionary arrangement by Ibn Fāris. Darwīsh<sup>113</sup> opposes the view that these new works had not yet reached Spain, but suggests that Ibn Sīdā considered them too elementary for experts. This is very likely. Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān tells<sup>114</sup> us that in the long khutba or introduction to

<sup>100</sup> See *Bughya*, 327; Ibn Khallikān, II, 372-3; Darwīsh, 41-44; Ibn Khair, 356-7; Qiftī, II, 225-7; Bulgha, 166-7.

<sup>110</sup> 266.

<sup>111</sup> By Abū ʿUbaid.

<sup>112</sup> Published Būlāq, 1316-1321 A.H., in 17 parts. For a full account, see *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ d-Ibn Sīdah-Étude, Index*, by M. Talbi, Tunis 1956. This work is in Arabic.

<sup>113</sup> 42.

<sup>114</sup> 167.

the "Muḥkam", Ibn Sida stated that the work was for the expert in language. It was the longest and fullest lexicon so far compiled, and was a major source for the "Lisān al-ʿArab" and for the "Qāmūs". The size of the work was due not to the introduction of new roots, but rather to the fuller listing of words derived from each root. Khalīl had set the tone for dictionaries, and, as we have seen, he was more concerned with showing every root than with defining every word. He did not, for example, go through all the common derived verbal forms for every root. He doubtless assumed familiarity with some, or at least knowledge of the common meaning-patterns which were associated with the different derived verb-forms. Later lexicographers had expanded the entries—for example, al-Azhārī. But Ibn Sida was writing nearly three-hundred years after al-Khalīl, in an age when knowledge of the classical language had become considerably weakened—especially in distant outposts like Spain, where distinct spoken dialects had grown up. A dictionary like the "ʿAin" was no longer adequate.

While retaining al-Khalīl's alphabet, Ibn Sida separated hamza from the weak letters wāw and yāʾ. But we have already seen that al-Qālī probably did this. On the other hand, he no longer treated the alif of prolongation separately. This was in line with current philological thought, which treated this letter as a change of wāw and yāʾ, if it occurred in the position of a radical. This innovation—hardly startling—was followed in the "Lisān" and the "Qāmūs". Lane had a high opinion of the "Muḥkam". He says<sup>115</sup>: "This is the greatest of the . . . lexicons . . . composed since the age of the "Ṣiḥāḥ . . . It is held in very high estimation for its copiousness, its accuracy, its critical remarks, and the numerous examples from classical poets . . . I have drawn from it very largely".

Here we have reached the end of the story of al-Khalīl's dictionary arrangement. It is only too easy to be critical of it. It was too clever to be practical. But while dictionaries were the treasured property of a few scholars, while oral transmission was the order of the day, the precise system used did not matter much. When the use of dictionaries became, of necessity, more widespread, a simpler scheme was required. The rhyme order, which we shall discuss in the next two chapters, filled that need. Khalīl had achieved two things: he had introduced the dictionary idea to the Arab world, and he had propagated

<sup>115</sup> *Lexicon* I, xv.



a deeper understanding of the nature of the language. Indeed, it might be argued that the introduction to the "Kitāb al-<sup>c</sup>Ain" is more important than the dictionary itself. Al-Khalīl may have stultified the growth of the Arabic lexicon; he had certainly stimulated philological thought and research. Moreover, the definitions which he used in the "<sup>c</sup>Ain" are copied over and over again by later lexicographers.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE RHYME ARRANGEMENT: THE "ṢAḤĀḤ" OF AL-JAUHARĪ

Al-Khalīl's anagrammatical dictionary arrangement was not seriously challenged for two-hundred years. It is true that his contemporary, Abū 'Amr al-Shāibānī, had, in a vague groping way, given an indication of the modern arrangement of the first letter in his "Kitāb al-Jīm", but he had not been imitated by compilers of large-scale dictionaries<sup>1</sup>. Towards the end of the Fourth Century of the Hijra, Ibn Fāris pushed it a stage further in his two dictionaries, the "Mujmal" and the "Maqāyīs"<sup>2</sup>. At roughly the same period another scheme was devised—the rhyme arrangement, by which roots were listed according to their final radials. This system was destined to hold sway in the Arab world until the Nineteenth Century, and even to influence lexicographers in Persian and Turkish; though Ibn Fāris's method found some supporters, especially among writers of specialised dictionaries of religious language. The credit for having invented the rhyme order is usually given to al-Jauharī—Abū Naṣr Ismā'īl ibn Ḥammād al-Fārābī al-Jauharī (died not later than 398/1007)<sup>3</sup>. In fact, however, he had been anticipated in both Hebrew and Arabic. An Egyptian Jew, Sa'ḍiyya ibn Yūsuf al-Fayyūmī (892-942 A.D.) compiled a Hebrew dictionary called the "Agron"<sup>4</sup>. It was in two parts; the first arranged according to initial letters, and the second according to finals—that is, in rhyme order. Sa'ḍiyya definitely intended his second part to help poets with their rhymes. There is no evidence that al-Jauharī knew of this work, though this is not absolutely outside the bounds of possibility. A. B. Keith also mentions the arrangement of words according to their final consonants

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> For biographical details, see the following: *Bughya*, 195; Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhar al-Alibba*<sup>2</sup>, 418-442; Qiftī, I, 194-8; Darwish, 91-98; also the Introductory volume (Muqaddima) to Aḥmad 'Abd al-Ghaffār's edition of the *Ṣaḥāḥ*, Cairo 1375/1956. The Būlāq edition of the *Ṣaḥāḥ* also contains an introduction, by Naṣr Abū l-Wafā' Ḥūrīnī.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 10.



as being one of the many different systems used in Sanscrit dictionaries<sup>5</sup>, but he does not specify the dates of such works, and they may be later than al-Jauharī. Much more to the point is the fact that al-Jauharī studied under his maternal uncle, Abū Ibrāhīm Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Fārābī (died 350/961), and the latter had used the rhyme order. This was in a vocabulary entitled "Dīwān al-Adab". Al-Fārābī divided his work into six books<sup>6</sup>:—sound or regular roots; doubled roots; roots with a weak initial radical; the trilateral; the quadrilateral; and the hamzated. Each book was in two parts, one for nouns, the other for verbs. Then each of these parts was divided into chapters according to word-forms. Within these chapters, words were arranged in alphabetical order according to the last radical. Thus, the rhyme order was only used in subsections, not as the basis of the book. The plan is complicated, and has some of the faults<sup>\*</sup> of al-Khalīl and Ibn Duraid, especially the separation of roots according to the number of radicals. Still, it may have suggested the rhyme order to al-Jauharī.

Al-Jauharī, the "wonder of his age" according to al-Qiftī and al-Suyūṭī, was born in Fārāb (modern Otrab) in Transoxiana. But we are informed that he preferred travel to settled life, and, after studying under his uncle locally, he went to Baghdad. There he studied philology under Abū 'Alā' al-Fārisī (288-356 A.H.) and Abū Sa'īd al-Sīrāfī (284-368). He became famous as a calligrapher as well as a lexicographer. Then he travelled to Arabia to perfect his knowledge of Arabic, visiting the Hedjaz, and the lands of the Muḍar and Rabī'ā tribes. He returned to Khurāsān, settling first in al-Dāmighān, and finally in Nīsāpūr. Here he produced his dictionary, "Tāj al-lughā wa Ṣaḥāḥ al-'Arabīya" (The crown of language and the correct of Arabic), known briefly as the "Ṣaḥāḥ". Rumour had it that he died before completing the faircopy of the work, and that this was carried out by his pupil, Abū Ishāq ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Warrāq. We are given this rumour as a reason for the apparent faults of the work—and here we are reminded of the attributing of the faults of the "Ain" to al-Laith. So perhaps the story should be taken with a "pinch of salt"! Al-Jauharī died in a remarkable fashion. It would appear that his linguistic labours unhinged his mind, for one day he climbed to the roof of the old mosque—or, perhaps, a house—in Nīsāpūr, and leapt to the ground, attempting to fly by using a pair of folding doors

<sup>5</sup> *History of Sanscrit Literature.*

<sup>6</sup> 'Attār, *op. cit.*, 80-82.

as wings. Al-Suyūṭī embroiders the story by having al-Jauharī harangue the passer-by below, before making his jump, in the following words: "Oh people, I have done something unprecedented in the world (presumably in compiling the "Ṣaḥāḥ"): and I will (now) do something unprecedented for the next world!"

Fortunately, we are able to study al-Jauharī's dictionary in print. There is first the Būlāq version, undated. This was a creditable undertaking, but it suffers from the defect of most Būlāq publications of the time—lack of clear setting-out, so that entries follow one another in close print, without beginning on a new line, and with words packed closely together. A new edition has been edited by Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Ḡhaffār ʿAttār. Published between 1375/1956 and 1377/1958, it consists of six volumes together with an introductory volume. The latter constitutes the most ambitious history of early Arabic lexicography yet written, and will well repay study. The dictionary itself is in small print, two columns to a page, but is extremely clear and well laid out. The editor's care is attested by many footnotes which contain frequent references to the "Lisān al-ʿArab". The "Ṣaḥāḥ" or "Ṣiḥāḥ"<sup>7</sup> was the first Arabic dictionary to be so arranged according to a single simple system as to be a useful reference work for the ordinary layman unskilled in Arabic philological science. It came at a time when it was badly needed—when the fragments of the empire of the Caliphs could no longer be termed "Arab" even in a loose sense, and when the general standard of proficiency in Arabic must have been low. It was eagerly seized by the educated—al-Qiftī testifies to the interest with which the first copy to reach Egypt was received by local savants<sup>8</sup>. It became the standard Arabic dictionary, and retained its position of pre-eminence for three-hundred years, until it was superseded by the "Qāmūs".

In a short introduction to the work, al-Jauharī writes<sup>9</sup>:—"I have deposited in this book what I consider correct of this language, whose status God ennobled, making religious and secular science dependent on the knowledge of it; in an arrangement in which none has anticipated me, and with an exactitude<sup>10</sup> unsurpassed. (It is) in 28 chapters, each consisting of 28 sections, according to the number and order of the letters of the alphabet, lest any sort of section should

<sup>7</sup> The early authorities are at pains to mention that either form is admissible.

<sup>8</sup> I, 195.

<sup>9</sup> ʿAttār's edition, Vol. I, p. 33.

<sup>10</sup> The text has "taḥdīḥ".



be overlooked in the chapters. (I have done this) after obtaining them (their contents) by oral transmission in Iraq, and learning them by thorough study, and discussing them with the true Arabs in their desert home-lands. I have not neglected any advice in this, neither have I spared myself. May God profit us, and here it is for you!" This Introduction is remarkably short, succinct, and unpretentious for an Arabic lexicographer. Al-Jauharī thus signalled the advent of the dictionary for the ordinary literate layman by dispensing with the traditional learned preamble. The latter, as we have seen, tended to contain two elements. The first was a technical account of the nature of the language—this would interest chiefly the professional philologists: the second was some reference to the works of previous lexicographers, and this—as in the case of al-Azharī—was all too ready an opportunity to glorify one's own efforts at the expense of those of one's predecessors. Al-Jauharī's modest preface makes two claims: to have included only correct words, and to have initiated a new arrangement. Leaving aside the first claim for the time being, let us consider the second. Al-Jauharī arranged his roots according to their final radicals in the first instance. This "kataba", "ḍaraba", "ḥabba", "ṭāba", "quṭrub", and "andalīb", for example, are all to be found in the "bā" chapter. There are 28 such chapters, beginning with hamza. But wāw and yā are combined in a long 27th chapter, and chapter 28 is reserved for a limited number of words ending in what is called the "soft alif", that is, the long vowel "ā". This is devoted to words which obviously puzzled the author—such as "idhā", "anā", "dhā", "yā" and "ilā", in which the final long "a" did not appear to be a wāw or yā which had changed. Within each chapter, roots are entered according to the first, and then the intermediate radicals. Thus al-Jauharī abolished the division of dictionaries according to the lengths of words, and no longer separated sound roots from weak ones.

This was, indeed, a vital step in the progress of the Arabic dictionary. But why should al-Jauharī have chosen to make the final radical the basis of his arrangement? And, having done this, why did he not then take the other radicals in successive (reverse) order? To put it mathematically, why 3-1-2, instead of 3-2-1, or 4-1-2-3, instead of 4-3-2-1? No satisfactory answer has been given, though interesting suggestions have been advanced. It has been all too readily assumed that the purpose was to provide ready rhymes for poets, since most Arabic poems use the same rhyme letter for all verses,

whether there are ten or a hundred. ‘Attār condemns this explanation as being a reflection on lexicographers, and an unfair limitation of their aims<sup>11</sup>. It is equally a reflection on Arabic poets. Surely we are not expected seriously to believe that even the humble purveyors of doggrel and occasional verse, let alone serious poets, were so incompetent in their craft that they must needs rely on a dictionary for rhymes! Further, a dictionary such as the “*Ṣaḥāḥ*” is not at all suitable as a rhyme dictionary. For Arabic rhymes depend not only on the rhyme consonant, but also the metre of the final foot of the verse, and therefore the measure of the rhyme word. Thus a poet wanting a rhyme for “*kaḥīr*” would not only have to go through the roots ending in *rāʾ*, of which there are at least a thousand, to find one giving a meaning which would fit. He would also have to read the whole entry for the selected root, to find one which had a long “*i*” or “*u*” before the “*r*”—for example, “*jadīr*”, “*ṣabūr*”, or “*ḥūr*”. Moreover, this long vowel would have to be preceded by a short one, so a word like “*taqṣīr*” would not do, in most metres. In the long run, therefore, it would be quicker for the poet to wait for inspiration. There is a similar objection to Jurjī Zaidān’s point that the rhyme order was useful in an age when rhymed prose (*sajʿ*) flourished<sup>12</sup>. We have mentioned that the earliest Arabic “art-prose” such as that of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib goes back to the end of the Umayyad period. It made considerable use of rhyme. But such style only reached its apogee in the *Maqāmāt* of Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamaḍānī (died 397/1008, aged 40) and al-Ḥarīrī (445/1054-516/1122). The former, it will be noted, was a contemporary of al-Jauharī, while the latter was not yet born when al-Jauharī died. In any case, in rhymed prose the word measure was just as vital as the rhyme—if not more so. An Arabic rhymster would probably have found a vocabulary classified under meanings much handier for finding *le mot juste* for his rhyme, than a large dictionary in which only the roots were in rhyme order. So, even if al-Jauharī did, indeed, use this order to help poets, he can hardly have achieved his object. What might be argued is that the growth of rhymed prose, reinforcing poetry, the most highly esteemed literary medium, may have made men “last-radical-conscious”, and may therefore have unwittingly influenced al-Jauharī’s choice. Alliteration of the initial letters of words, although not entirely absent, is not a prominent feature of Arabic

<sup>11</sup> Muqaddima volume, p. 121.

<sup>12</sup> Jurjī Zaidān, *Adab al-Luḡha*, Cairo, vol. I, 310.



rhetoric or poetry. However, the practice of arranging or listing the poems of a "Dīwān" according to the rhyme letter, may have influenced al-Jauharī. Another suggestion comes from ʿAttār<sup>13</sup> and Darwīsh<sup>14</sup>. They argue that the "Ṣaḥāḥ" was written for the generality, and point out that in Arabic derived forms—particularly verbs—the initial radical is often obscured. It is frequently preceded by letters of increase, as "takabbara" and "istakbara" from "kabura". The final radical, however, is only followed by the familiar pronominal suffixes indicating gender, number, and person. From this, they claim that the tiro would find it easier to look up a strange word, as he would be in no doubt as to its final radical. This argument, though plausible at first sight, will hardly "hold water". If the tiro were as ignorant as that on the nature of the language, how would he be able to check a deficient verb which he encountered in the jussive form, in which the final weak radical had disappeared altogether? As it is, in unvowelled Arabic, even the expert has still to look up such verbs under several alternative roots. Moreover, even if our tiro found the final radical, he would still have to identify the first radical before he could proceed any further. Again, if al-Jauharī did intend to cater for the ignorant, why, for example, did he enter "ʿAnkabūt" (spider) under ʿ-k-b? <sup>15</sup> It is well known to students of Arabic—indeed, it is one of the major trials of the beginner—that an Arabic dictionary cannot be effectively used without a sound grasp of the grammar and the structure of the language. This is due not only to the letters of increase in derived forms, and the strange behaviour of the weak letters, but to the habit of entering words under their roots. Some years ago, I suggested <sup>16</sup> that the rhyme order may have facilitated learning by heart, at a time when books, being in manuscript, were expensive; when learning long books by heart was very common; and when no-one could claim to have studied a work thoroughly unless he had been taught it orally. This last matter was important, since manuscripts were usually unvowelled, and copyists made frequent mistakes. Yet this suggestion is not completely satisfying. There is the possibility that al-Jauharī adopted the idea from his uncle, who may or may not have heard of Saʿdīya's use of it—or even of its use in India. Or perhaps al-Jauharī himself had heard of

<sup>13</sup> *op. cit.*, 122-3.

<sup>14</sup> 93-4.

<sup>15</sup> ʿAttār's edition I, 188.

<sup>16</sup> J. A. Haywood, *The History of Arabic Lexicography in Perspective*, Durham University Journal, Dec. 1957, p. 11.

Sa<sup>c</sup>diya's work. Yāqūt tells us that he had seen a copy of al-Fārābī's "Dīwān al-Adab" in al-Jauharī's handwriting<sup>17</sup>. But if this is so, why should he claim to have invented the plan? The answer is that when he claimed to have used a new system he was not referring specifically to the rhyme order, but to his listing of roots in one consolidated series, irrespective of the number of radicals they comprised. In other words, he was claiming—with justice—to have introduced a dictionary arrangement based on a single simple principle—the normal alphabetical order of the letters.

Another innovation of al-Jauharī was his method of indicating the vowelling of words and other orthographical signs<sup>18</sup>. This was important, as copyists normally dispensed with the arduous labour of writing them in—and in any case, when included, they were so small as to make mis-copying extremely common. Al-Jauharī's system was to indicate vowels and orthographical signs in full wording, where words varied from a well-known norm, and to use familiar words as models. Thus, "bi l-tashdīd" indicated the doubling of a letter, usually the second radical as in "šiddiq". If "bi l-taḥrik" (with vowelling) was added after a word, this meant that the second radical was vowelled. "Bi l-fath" meant that the preceding word was of the form "fa<sup>c</sup>l". "Bi l-fath wa l-taḥrik" meant that it was "fa<sup>c</sup>al". With verbs, the vital vowelling of the second radical was shewn thus: "ḥasabtuhu, aḥsubuhu, with ḍamma, (verbal nouns) ḥasban, ḥisāban, and ḥusbānan"<sup>19</sup>.

The "Ṣaḥāḥ" is characterised by succinct definitions, (often coinciding with those of the "Ain"), and illustrative examples from poetry and from Arab speech of the desert. The author also shewed deep interest in grammar, syntax, and derivation. Thus "bakht" (luck) is recognised as an Arabicised word; "muhandis" (geometrician, engineer) is trace to the Persian "hindāz". Aḍdād—that is, words which have opposite meanings, such as *sha<sup>c</sup>aba*, to unite or to separate—are fully explained. Words which occur only in "itbā<sup>c</sup>" are included. Itbā<sup>c</sup> is a feature of many languages: it consists of pairing words, by adding to one word another which rhymes with it, and which adds nothing to the meaning, and which may even be, of itself, quite meaningless. Thus "ḥasan basan" merely means "ḥasan" (good). In English this is associated with baby talk, as in "doggy-woggy".

<sup>17</sup> *Bughya*, 191.

<sup>18</sup> Darwīsh, 94-5; Attār, 125 ff.

<sup>19</sup> I, 109.



Despite its fame, the "Ṣaḥāḥ" was no less criticised than its predecessors. It included many copyists' errors, we are told, both in the words defined and in the illustrative poetical examples. Some words are entered under wrong roots, owing to faulty derivation. The failure to separate final wāw and yā' is also criticised. The chief criticism, however, was that, in trying to confine his work to correct speech, he had omitted much—his purism had gone too far. This al-Ṣaghānī was able to include 60,000 new entries in his "Takmila" or completion of the "Ṣaḥāḥ". Al-Fīrūzābādī says in his preface to the "Qāmūs" that the "Ṣaḥāḥ" scarcely contains half the language<sup>20</sup>. This criticism may not be justified. Aḥmad Fāris al-Ṣhidyāq, the nineteenth-century Lebanese writer, counted specimen sections of the "Ṣaḥāḥ" and the "Qāmūs", and was surprised to discover that, excluding proper names, the "Ṣaḥāḥ" contained more entries<sup>21</sup>.

Until the "Qāmūs", no Arabic dictionary gave rise to such a volume of literature as the "Ṣaḥāḥ". Apart from an extensive polemical literature in praise or condemnation, there are abridgements, completions, expansions, and commentaries. These are listed in the introduction to ṢAttār's edition, as well as in the "Bulḡa"<sup>22</sup>. Broadly speaking, the authors of the "Lisān al-ʿArab" and the "Qāmūs" perpetuated al-Jauharī's influence on Arabic lexicography. The former relied on the "hawāṣhī" (marginal notes) of al-Jauharī's pupil, Ibn Barri, who added both illustrations and omitted words to his master's work. Al-Ṣaghānī (or Ṣāghānī) (573/1177-660/1262), as we have seen, made considerable additions in his "Takmila". Al-Barmakī (died 397/1006) added a little, and re-arranged the whole in the modern alphabetical order in his "Muntahā", thus anticipating al-Zamakhsharī<sup>23</sup>. Several "mukhtaṣarāt" or abridgements of the "Ṣaḥāḥ" were compiled<sup>24</sup>. The most famous was al-Rāzī's "Mukhtār al-Ṣaḥāḥ", published in Būlāq in 1282/1865. Another, Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad al-Zinjānī's "Tahdhīb al-Ṣaḥāḥ" was published in Cairo in 1371/1952, edited by ṢAttār and Hārūn. Al-Zinjānī was born in 573 A.H., and was killed in Baghdad in 656/1258, when the Mongol hordes of Hūlāgū sacked the city. He first abridged the "Ṣaḥāḥ" to one-fifth of its original extent, and then halved this, so that his abridgement was one-tenth of the original.

<sup>20</sup> Cairo edition, 1357/1938, Vol. I, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Darwīsh, 93.

<sup>22</sup> See the account of the *Ṣaḥāḥ*, *Bulḡa*, pp. 126-134.

<sup>23</sup> MSS of parts of the *Muntahā* are to be found in Mecca and Istanbul.

<sup>24</sup> For a full list with descriptions, see ṢAttār, 198-226.

Both he and al-Rāzī omitted most quadriliteral and quinquiliteral roots, besides pruning other entries to the very limit.

Al-Ṣaghānī, whom we have mentioned, was the leading lexicographer of his age<sup>25</sup>, or, as al-Ṣuyūṭī puts it, "the carrier of the banner of *luḡha* in his time". In addition to the "*Takmila*", he compiled two major dictionaries, one short, and one long. The former, "*Majmaʿ al-Baḥrain*"<sup>26</sup>, (The confluence of the two seas), though often referring to the "*Ṣaḥāḥ*", is designed chiefly as a dictionary of the *Ḥadīth* and the *Qurān*—hence the title. Consequently, only limited words are mentioned under each root. The large work is the "*ʿUḇāb*", which has not yet been printed. Lane described it as "after the "*Muḥkam*", the greatest of the lexicographical works composed since the age of the "*Ṣaḥāḥ*"<sup>27</sup>. Lane also reported that a copy said to exist in a Cairo mosque library was subsequently discovered to be missing. In any case, the work was unfinished, reaching only the root "*bakama*", which means "to be dumb". This caused a rather cruel rhyme to gain currency, to the effect that al-Ṣaghānī, who had mastered the sciences and philosophies, the long and short of his affairs was that he became dumb". Both these dictionaries were written in the rhyme order, and the "*ʿUḇāb*" was used as a major source by the compiler of the "*Lisān al-ʿArab*".

The importance of the "*Ṣaḥāḥ*" is exemplified by the fact that its arrangement was imitated by the main succeeding lexicographers. It ceased to be the standard work only when the "*Lisān*" and "*Qāmūs*" appeared. These were more suited to a later age which required a large and exhaustive dictionary, and which was not interested in any purist's endeavour to exclude incorrect or non-Arabic words. The result was that the "*Ṣaḥāḥ*", despite its fame in theory, was neglected in practice until modern times. No doubt, now that a good edition exists, it will be used increasingly by scholars. In any case, it marks a turning point in the history of Arabic lexicography.

<sup>25</sup> *Bughyo*, 227.

<sup>26</sup> There is a bound manuscript copy in the Library of the School of Oriental Studies, University of Durham.

<sup>27</sup> *Lexicon*, Introduction, p. xv.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### LATER DICTIONARIES IN THE RHYME ARRANGEMENT: THE "LISÂN AL-‘ARAB" AND THE "QĀMŪS",

The most obvious proof of al-Jauharī's success is the fact that his dictionary held its ground for three-hundred years; and even after that, his arrangement was retained. Nevertheless, it was almost inevitable that a more exhaustive work should follow it sooner or later. From the 11th. to the 16th. centuries, Arabic literature displays an increasing preoccupation with compendia on the one hand, and abridgements of major works on the other hand, in the various scientific and technical fields. The alphabetical dictionary medium was applied to other subjects—as is exemplified in the biographical dictionary of Ibn Khallikān (1211-1282 A.D.) and the biographical and geographical dictionaries of Yāqūt (1179-1229 A.D.). In a period when it was permissible to incorporate wholesale previous writers' works in one own, and when quotation marks were not used, it was to be expected that someone would combine the huge storehouse of material comprised in the famous dictionaries of earlier times, in one gigantic lexicon. Moreover, since quantity was sometimes more highly esteemed than quality, and exhibitionism in the shape of the parade of a *recherché* vocabulary had been given the stamp of genius in the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarirī, al-Jauharī's restrictive purism made little appeal. What was wanted was the whole vocabulary of Arabic—or as much of it as was humanly possible to amass; for it was well-known that none but the prophet Muḥammad had been able to comprehend so rich a language in its entirety.

Ibn Manẓūr, sometimes known as Ibn Mukarram—Muḥammad ibn Mukarram ibn ‘Alī Riḍwān ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī l-Qāsim ibn Ḥubqa ibn Manẓūr al-Ansārī al-Ifriqī al-Miṣrī Jamāl al-Dīn Abū l-Faḍl<sup>1</sup> (630/1232<sup>2</sup>-711/1311) was born in Tunis<sup>3</sup>. He was a Shi‘ite, though free from biogotry. He served for a long period in the secretariat of the Mamlūk rulers of Egypt, and was afterwards judge of Libyan

<sup>1</sup> So in *Bughya*: p. 106; there are various versions of the name.

<sup>2</sup> Darwish, p. 100, wrongly gives the birth-date as 680.

<sup>3</sup> For biographical material, see: *Bughya*, 106; Darwish, 99-101; and the Preface to the new Beyrouth edition of the *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 1374/1955, vol. I, 4.

Tripoli for some time. Finally, he spent the remaining years of his life in Cairo. Despite his doubtless arduous official duties, he was a prolific writer, endowed with a prodigious memory. It is said that he left 500 volumes of his works in his own handwriting. There is little wonder, then, that he went blind in his old age! His works cover almost all fields—religion, science, and philology; and he was also a poet. While he composed compendia and anthologies, most of his books were abridgements of standard works. We are told that there was scarcely a standard work that he failed to abridge. Yet his claim to fame is based on his dictionary, “*Lisān al-‘Arab*”, which aimed at fullness, not brevity, and which was the recognised exhaustive work even until modern times<sup>4</sup>.

In his introduction to the “*Lisān*”, Ibn Manẓūr begins by saying that God has made man superior to other animals by the gift of speech, and that Arabic was honoured among languages as the vehicle of the Qurān. Then he goes on to say that he has always been keen on reading lexicographical works; but, unfortunately, those whose contents are good are poorly arranged; whereas those which are well arranged are poor in content . . . yet both content and arrangement must be good, if a book is to be useful. Of all the available books on “*luġha*”, he has found none more attractive than al-Azhari’s “*Tahdhīb*”, and none more complete than Ibn Sīda’s “*Muḥkam*”. These two are the outstanding lexicographical works; others, compared with them, are mere meanderings. But they are difficult to use, as if their authors had showed people a sweet watering place and pasturage, yet prevented their access to them. They had intended to be clear, but had been obscure; so that people had been confused by the biliteral, trilateral, quadrilateral and quinquilateral; the doubled, the weak, and the doubly weak; and had thus failed to find what they wanted. As a result, these two works had become neglected and almost unobtainable<sup>5</sup>. This is due solely to their unsatisfactory arrangement, and the confusion due to the manner in which they are divided into chapters. But, on the other hand, al-Jauharī had arranged his “abridgement”—not altogether a complimentary description of the “*Ṣaḥāḥ*”—well, and consequently

<sup>4</sup> See also Tasköprüzâde’s *Miftâḥ es-Saʿâde*, Teil I, Stuttgart 1934, 121. The second volume was never published. This is a German translation — the Arabic text has been printed in Hyderabad, India.

Also, Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafāyāt*, II, 524-5, Cairo 1951; and Dr. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Ḥamza, *al-Ḥarakat al-Fikrīya fī Miṣr fī l-‘Aṣrain al-Ayyūbiyya l-Mamlūkiyya al-Awval*, Cairo 1947(?), pp. 242-244.

<sup>5</sup> Beyrouth edition, I, 7.



people had eagerly sought it; even though it was, as it were, a mere drop in the ocean of the language, and contained many copyists' errors. Ibn Barri had corrected and completed it in a good book. Ibn al-Athir's "Nihāya", a dictionary of Qurānic and Ḥadīth language, had put some words in wrong places, through a failure to distinguish letters of increase from radicals. The present work, Ibn Manẓūr goes on to say, is meant to replace previous works by drawing from them. He makes no false claims from himself such as "I spoke to...", "I heard...", "I did...", "I composed...", "I set out...", "I travelled...", "I transmitted or obtained from the true desert Arabe". After al-Azhārī there is no scope left for such claims. All he claims is to have collected and collated the works of the authors he has mentioned. Any virtues or defects must be imputed to their originators, for he has done no more than to quote them. The "Lisān" is, therefore, a compendium of the "Tahdhīb", "Muḥkam", and "Nihāya", together with the "Ṣaḥāḥ" taken in conjunction with Ibn Barri's completion of it <sup>6</sup>.

Speaking Arabic, Ibn Manẓūr says, has come to be regarded as a fault. Men vie with each other in translating Arabic books into other languages. So his dictionary has come at the right time: he has made it as Noah made the Ark, while his people scoffed.

He has followed al-Jauharī's plan save in one small matter. Al-Azhārī, at the end of his dictionary, dealt with the cryptic letters which come at the head of the sūras of the Qurān: he prefers to commence his dictionary with them, before launching into the body of the book, because of their sacredness, and for easy access—for the reader usually samples a book from the beginning <sup>7</sup>.

After explaining these cryptic letters <sup>8</sup>, Ibn Manẓūr describes the phonetics of the alphabet, quoting from previous lexicographers in wording much of which goes back to al-Khalīl <sup>9</sup>. He gives the phonetic alphabet of al-Khalīl, Ibn Sīda and Sībawaihi, and discusses the mutual compatibility or incompatibility of letters, and also their frequencies <sup>10</sup>. Finally <sup>11</sup>, to our surprise, he explains the occult powers of letters, and their efficacy in medicine, quoting al-Būnī <sup>12</sup>. This is a curious addition to the usual preface-content of the old dic-

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-12.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-16.

<sup>12</sup> Died 1225 A.D.

tionaries. Letters, he says, may be classified as hot and dry, hot and wet, cold and dry, and cold and wet. These types may be effective against various bodily ills. Against headache, a magic square with a tā<sup>2</sup> on each side is effective, for example. This seeming intrusion into a linguistic work is in keeping with the notion<sup>13</sup> that a dictionary must be a sort of encyclopaedia; that being so, in discussing the properties of the letters of the alphabet, their occult properties should presumably not be omitted.

Ibn Manẓūr retained al-Jauharī's arrangement as being the handiest. Yet in the meantime, there had been a succession of dictionaries adopting the modern order according to the initial letters of words. The two dictionaries of al-Jauharī's contemporary, Ibn Fāris, will be dealt with in the next chapter. In addition, from the 12th. to the 14th centuries, there had appeared al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī's dictionary of Quranic language; al-Zamakhsharī's "Asās al-Balāgha", designed to indicate metaphorical meanings for use in rhetorical language; Ibn al-Athīr's "Nihāya", confined to Quranic and Ḥadīth language; and al-Muṭar-rizī's "Mughrib", for the language of the Ḥadīth and jurisprudence. It may seem strange that Ibn Manẓūr should have failed to follow their example in his quest for convenience. Even if he did not know all of them, he knew the "Nihāya". Darwīsh explains<sup>14</sup>: "It seems also that he was fond of lengthy books to such an extent that it made him fail to consider the arrangement of Ibn Fāris and al-Zamakhsharī, because of the small size of their books". This may well be the case. But there is also the consideration that these two works, and others in the modern arrangement mentioned above, were all specialised dictionaries. In the field of the complete general dictionary, the choice was clearly between the anagrammatical-phonetic system of al-Khalīl and the rhyme arrangement of al-Jauharī. As we have seen, Ibn Manẓūr was not impressed by the arrangement of words under their roots in the "Nihāya". Finally, it is fruitless to argue that Ibn Manẓūr should have recognised the obvious merits of the modern arrangement. He was a compiler, not a thinker—he was not an original mind even in the field of lexicography in which he excelled. As far as he was concerned, al-Jauharī's arrangement had proved its worth, and, as a genius of industry rather than originality, he saw no need to change it.

No praise can be too high for Ibn Manẓūr's achievement in producing so exhaustive a work. In the Beyrouth edition of 1955/6, it

<sup>13</sup> Hamza, *op. cit.*, 236.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, 99.



consists of 15 volumes of about 500 double-columned pages each<sup>15</sup>. With the possible exception of Chinese work, it was the most copious dictionary the world had yet seen. As we have learned, from the time of al-Khalil onwards, Arabic lexicography, unlike that of other nations, had set out to record, if not the vocabulary in its entirety, at least the whole range of roots which formed the basis of that vocabulary. The "Lisān" forms the culmination, recording, as far as the author was able, all the roots, and all the words derived from those roots, which were, or had been, in use, together with ample illustrative examples. It is a veritable store-house of Arabic language, science, and arts. As Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq said<sup>16</sup>, "It is a book of lexicography, jurisprudence, grammar, accident, ḥadīth-explanation and Quranic-commentary". It contains 80,000 entries, each devoted to one root and its derivatives, a number which was only surpassed by the "Tāj al-ʿArūs" with its 120,000; the latter, however, is comparatively deficient in its illustrative examples<sup>17</sup>. The definitions of the "Lisān" are full, leaving no room for ambiguity: two or more definitions are often given for a single word, to ensure clarity. Numerous examples are quoted from the Qurān, the Sunna, poetry and proverbs. Ibn Manẓūr is content to repeat verbatim what previous lexicographers have written in their dictionaries; where two of them disagree, he tends merely to repeat what both have said, even at the risk of appearing to contradict himself. A lexicographer on this scale—especially one who also had numerous other "irons in the fire"—could not afford the time to be critical. And one cannot help sympathising with him, not only because of the magnitude of his task, but because the Arabs spent far too much time arguing about comparatively minor points of philology ... whether this word or that was vowelised with fatha or kasra, whether such-and-such a measure of the broken plural was admissible for a certain word. In no other nation were the savants more adroit in justifying their own existence by creating work for themselves—and for others. At the beginning of the present century, after the publication of the Būlāq edition of the "Lisān", Ibrāhīm al-Yāzījī devoted many pages of his journal, "al-Ḍiyāʾ"<sup>18</sup> to pointing out the

<sup>15</sup> The Būlāq Edition of 1300-1308 A.H. is in 20 vols. of about 500 pages each, in close print.

<sup>16</sup> In the introduction to the Būlāq edition.

<sup>17</sup> Ibrāhīm al-Yāzījī, articles *Lisān al-ʿArab* in "al-Ḍiyāʾ", Vol. VI (1903-4), pp. 65-66. See also Darwīsh, 100, and Ḥamza, 243.

<sup>18</sup> Vol. VI, pp. 65, 97, 129, 161, 193, 225, 289, 321, 353, 385, 417, 449, 481, 513, 553, 577.

errors in the work. Many of them, he suggested, were due not merely to the copyists, but to the author himself, and the authorities on whom he had based his dictionary. The examples he gives reveal mostly either wrong vowelling, or mistakes over diacritical points—"tazayyadahā", for example, in mistake for "tazabbadahā". Most of them are corrected in the Beyrouth edition. Dr. ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Ḥamza<sup>19</sup> makes the one major criticism which may justifiably be levelled at the "Lisān"—that consulting it is a slow process. This is, in part, due to its prolixity—one can't "see the wood for the trees". But it is also due to the fact that the Arabic lexicographers, concerned as they were with the problem of how to arrange roots, and with the difference between radicals and letters of increase, scarcely troubled themselves with the problem of how best to tabulate the various derivations of any given root. Consequently, in the "Lisān"—as in previous dictionaries—under any given triliteral root, the simple verb may be given first, or a verbal noun (infinitive), or even an adjective<sup>20</sup>. There is no guarantee that the simpler forms will occur first, before the more complicated ones; and even if they do, the author is quite likely to go back to them, after having passed on to more complex derivations. Much space is also wasted where, for example, a verse of poetry is quoted in support of a given definition of a word, to explain the meaning of other words occurring in that verse which have no real bearing on the point under discussion. Truth to tell, a "digressional disease" afflicted late Arabic technical literature; this is well illustrated by such works as Ibn Hishām's commentary on the poem "Bānat Suʿād" by Kaʿb ibn Zuhair<sup>21</sup>.

Yet, after all, such criticisms show ingratitude. The reading of any of the longer articles in the "Lisān" is a linguistic and literary experience. It gives us glimpses into a whole world of Arabic culture. Though Lane may have favoured the "Tāj al-ʿArūs", to the average educated Arab, the "Lisān" is still the major reference, on a par with the Oxford English Dictionary. For quick reference, however, he uses the "Qāmūs", to which we must now turn our attention.

During the Middle Ages, it became increasingly the custom of Arabic writers to give their books fanciful titles containing metaphorical expressions. Thus al-Masʿūdī's tenth-century historico-geographical des-

<sup>19</sup> *Op. cit.*, 224.

<sup>20</sup> The entry for ʿ-l-m begins with "ʿalim", "ʿālim", and "ʿallām", because they are among the 99 names of God.

<sup>21</sup> I. Guidi, *Carmen Kabi ben Zoheir*, Leipzig 1871.



cription of the world was entitled "the Prairies of Gold" (Murūj al-dhahab). In the following century, al-Thaʿālābī entitled his anthology of contemporary poetry "the Unique Pearl of the Time" (Yatīmat al-Dahr). Previously, lexicographers had, for the most part, given their works prosaic titles. True, the Ṣāhib Ibn ʿAbbād, as we have seen, went so far as to indicate the copiousness of his dictionary by calling it "al-Muḥīt fī l-lughā", but whether he meant the "ocean of language" or the "all-embracing" is doubtful. Al-Jauharī had called his work the "crown of language", but it was the other half of the title, "the correct of Arabic" which gained currency. To Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Fīrūzābādī (726/1326-817/1414) fell the honour of unwittingly coining the modern Arabic word for dictionary, by calling his dictionary "al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīt" (the Surrounding Ocean). The word "Qāmūs", thanks to the wide currency of the dictionary, and others based on it in several languages, came to mean a dictionary. Whether or not the word is a corruption of the Greek "Okeanos", it occurs in the Ḥadīth, and is mentioned in many of the dictionaries, as meaning the main, middle, or deepest part of the sea <sup>22</sup>.

Al-Fīrūzābādī <sup>23</sup> is often described as having been born in Fīrūzābād, a village near Shīrāz (he is also sometimes called "al-Shīrāzī"). In fact, it would seem that his grandfather came from that place, and he himself tells us that he was born in Karzīn <sup>24</sup>. He early showed that phenomenal memory which is illustrated by his statement that he never went to bed without having learned 300 (or 200?) verses. By the age of seven, he had learned the Qurʾān by heart. He began his studies locally, moving to Shīrāz at the age of eight. Then he went to Iraq—Wāsiṭ and Baghdad, to continue his education, specialising in lughā and fiqh. Henceforward, he spent a good deal of his long life travelling from one country to another, studying and teaching, and seeking and securing the patronage of princes <sup>25</sup>. Wherever he went, he would carry loads of books, which he would unload whenever he stayed in a place, in order to be able to read them. If he became temporarily short of money, he would sell some of them <sup>26</sup>. From Baghdad he went to Syria, where his outstanding ability was recognised, and students flocked to him. His subsequent

<sup>22</sup> So in *Ṣaḥāḥ*, *Jamhara*, *Maqāyis* and *Lisān*.

<sup>23</sup> See *Hamza*, 239-242; *Tasköprüzâde*, 117-120; *Darwish*, 102-106; *Bughya*, 117-118; *Bulgha*, 143-154.

<sup>24</sup> See entry k-r-z in the *Qāmūs*, Cairo edition, II, 189.

<sup>25</sup> *Bughya* 117.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

travels, though consistly reported in their broad outline by the various biographers, are complicated and confused in detail. Al-Sikhāwī attempts to give the detailed itinerary in his biographical dictionary of people of the Ninth Century A.H. <sup>27</sup>. From Damascus, al-Fīrūzābādī went to Jerusalem, then to Cairo, then on the pilgrimage to Mecca. After again visiting Cairo and Baghdad, he spent ten years in Mecca. Here he wrote his commentary on al-Bukhārī's Ḥadīth collection, the "Ṣaḥīḥ", and his dictionary. Later, we find him in Rūm (Asia Minor), as tutor to Bāyazīd, son of the Ottoman sultan Murād I, who richly rewarded him. Then he went to India, then to his native Fārs. Here he met Tamerlane, the chastiser of the same Bāyazīd who had been his pupil. Tamerlane rewarded him with 5,000 dinars (or 100,000 dirhems). He spent the final period of his life in Arabia. The Rasūlid ruler of the Yemen, al-Ashraf Ismā'īl, whose capital was al-Yazīd, not only made him chief Qāḍī, but also honoured him by accepting his daughter in marriage. He spent also some time in Ṭā'if, Medina and Mecca. In the latter two places, he established schools, and installed masters to teach in his absence. These he had to close after the death of his patron, Ismā'īl. He also possessed property in a number of places—a garden in Ṭā'if, and houses in Munā and elsewhere. He died in Zabīd in 817 A.H., aged over 90, and still holding his post of Qāḍī. Eighteen years earlier he had pleaded with the Sultan to be allowed to end his days in Mecca. He was refused on the grounds that he could not be spared.

He was an industrious author. Apart from the "Qāmūs", he wrote a large-scale commentary on al-Bukhārī, already mentioned, and a commentary on the first sūra of the Qurān, together with a number of short monographs of a philological nature with such titles as: "What can be said with either *sīn* or *shīn*"; "Names of the lion"; "Marriage terms"; "Wine names"; "Nouns describing young women". Altogether the names of about 40 of his works are known. One—a life of the Prophet—is in Persian. He wrote much poetry, but it was inferior to his prose, being marred by those abstruse rare words which might be expected to appeal to a lexicographer. His speed of composition was proverbial. He could compose a short treatise overnight. For example, when he was once asked whether honey was the vomit or excreta of bees, he wrote a monograph on the subject overnight.

Yet, were it not for his dictionary, he would long have been for-

<sup>27</sup> al-Sikhāwī, *al-Daw' al-Lānī li Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi*, Cairo 1955, X, 79-81.



gotten. Not only has the word "Qāmūs" come to mean dictionary; but to Arab students of their language, dictionary still means, generally, the "Qāmūs". Ṣiddiq Ḥasan Khān tells us that in his days, 8,000 manuscript copies existed spread over the Islamic world, though he does not give the basis for his statistics. As early as 1230/1817, the first printed edition appeared in Calcutta—the home of so many pioneer publications in Arabic and Persian literature. In the same year a Turkish translation appeared in Scutari<sup>28</sup>. There were subsequent editions in India and Iran (Teheran). But it was the printing of the work in Cairo (Būlāq) from 1272/1856 onwards, which made it widely available to the Arabs themselves. It is usually printed these days in four volumes of handy size, costing in the region of a pound each, and it can safely be said that no native teacher of Arabic—at any rate at the secondary school level and above—would be without his own copy. Whereas the "Lisān" is for the library, the "Qāmūs" is for the study and the school.

The dictionary opens with a preface in ornate rhymed prose reminiscent of al-Ḥarīrī<sup>29</sup>. After referring to God as the giver of language, and the Prophet as the most eloquent speaker, the author refers to the importance of lexicography as an aid to the understanding of the *shari'a*. There have been experts in *luḡa* in the past in all ages—"fa allafū wa afāḍū, wa ṣannafū wa ajādū". He himself, he says, has long been an expert, and had searched for a comprehensive dictionary; but, when baffled in his quest, he began (*shara' tu fi*) his large-scale dictionary known as the "Lāmi", or, in full, "al-Lāmi al-mu'lam al-ujāb al-jāmi bain al-Muḥkam wa l-'Ubāb"—"the Plain and Marvellous Luminary correlating Ibn Sīda's "Muḥkam" and the "'Ubāb" of al-Ṣghānī". These two lexicons, he says, are the outstanding ones. He also made additions to them, making his "Lāmi" superior to anything yet compiled—did he know of the "Lisān", I wonder?—But he estimated that it (*khammantuhu*) would consist of sixty volumes, and would thus be inaccessible to students. He was therefore requested to prepare a short book on the same plan, which should, nevertheless, be full. He produced the present work, omitting the illustrative examples (*shawāhid*). Thirty volumes of the large work are comprised in one volume of the smaller one, yet it still contains, in briefer form, the whole of the contents of his two major sources, the "Muḥkam" and the "'Ubāb", and more besides. He has called

<sup>28</sup> See Chapter 10.

<sup>29</sup> Cairo edition, I, 2-7.

it "al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ", because it is, as it were, the greatest ocean. He has noticed the popularity of al-Jauharī's "Ṣaḥāḥ"—and this popularity is justly deserved. But it has omitted at least a half of the language, either by omitting roots altogether, or by neglecting to mention rare meanings. He therefore wishes his own book's superiority to be obvious from the start. To that end, he has written matter missing from the "Ṣaḥāḥ" in red ink; not in a boasting spirit, but to show, as the poet says, "how much the first has left to the last". Al-Fīrūzābādī then lists some of the special merits of his dictionary. First and foremost, he has separated the wāw and the yā<sup>2</sup>, which has eluded previous compilers. This is not strictly true. Admittedly al-Khalīl had classed them together to form the last chapter of the "Ain", and Ibn Duraid had not clearly distinguished them. Al-Jauharī had confused them as final radicals, but distinguished them as medials and initials. Ibn Fāris, with whose work al-Fīrūzābādī was familiar, had clearly separated them. Apart from this, a strong case could be made for considering these two letters as one for dictionary purposes, except when they are initial, since they both frequently change to alif, and are not distinguished in certain verbal derived forms. The other merits he claims for his book serve two purposes—brevity and clarity. Brevity was achieved by the regular use of abbreviations—and in this he was a real pioneer. The Arabs were already accustomed to abbreviating certain pious formulae of frequent occurrence, as, for instance "ṣ-l-ṣ-m" for "ṣallā llāhu ʿalihi wa sallam" when the Prophet was mentioned. Al-Fīrūzābādī used five letters as abbreviations: the letter mīm, meaning "maʿrūf" (known), to avoid defining such common words as palm, bee, house, horse, and so on; previous lexicographers have frequently either given no definition, or written "maʿrūf" in full. Sometimes they had used some meaningless formula, such as "man—the singular of men"! The letter jīm he used for "jamʿ" (plural), and it is still so used in Arabic dictionaries. Two jīms meant the plural of a plural. The other three abbreviation letters were to deal with the large number of proper names—particularly geographical ones—which occur in the "Qāmūs". The inclusion of these is open to criticism. It could be argued that they are out of place in a linguistic dictionary. Yet I feel sure that many readers thought otherwise in a period when maps were almost non-existent. Place-names in general are indicated by the letter ʿain, for mawḍiʿ; towns by dāl, for balad; and villages by tā<sup>3</sup> marbūṭa, for qarya. In addition, his use of red ink for material not in the "Ṣaḥāḥ"



must, I suppose, be deemed an abbreviation. Where nouns take the regular feminine with *tāʾ marbūṭa*, we read "wa hiya bi l-hāʾ"—though we might have expected al-Fīrūzābādī's ingenuity to have found something briefer than this. Finally, he was much concerned to show vowel-lining in an unequivocal manner without undue waste of space. We have already seen how al-Jauharī approached this problem. Al-Fīrūzābādī adopted similar measures, which he refers to in his preface, without, however, acknowledging his debt to al-Jauharī. He based his system on three principles. Firstly, certain words were so familiar that his readers were expected to know the vowel-lining. Secondly, he assumed certain normal vowel-linings, and only indicated variants. Thus in the simple trilateral noun, the norm was "faʿl", as in "mahl" (slowness, gentleness). Where the second consonant also had *fathḥa*, as in "ḥasan", the explicatory formula was "muḥarrak" (vowelled). If a word was vowel-lined with *ḍamma* or *kasra*, followed by *sukūn*, as in *ṣubḥ* and "riḥm", the formula was "with *ḍamma*" or "with *kasra*". For other noun forms, common words were used as models. Thirdly, the alternative vowel-linings of the simple trilateral verb were indicated by model verbs giving the six alternatives. Thus, "ka samīʿa" meant that the verb has *kasra* in the perfect, and *fathḥa* in the imperfect. In this indication of vowel-lining, al-Fīrūzābādī adopted and modified slightly what al-Jauharī had done.

By these ingenious means, he was able to cram into two volumes 60,000 entries. He had consulted a thousand books in the process, but omitted all reference to them and their authors, as well as the usual illustrative examples, to save space. The success of the book shows how well it satisfied a need. Copies multiplied, and many abridgements and commentaries were written<sup>30</sup>. The work was translated into Persian and Turkish. All the same, it found its detractors as well as its champions. There was considerable polemical literature for and against, which really resolved itself into Jauharī versus Fīrūzābādī. This, it must be confessed, al-Fīrūzābādī had called down upon himself, not only by his flamboyant display of his predecessor's omissions in red ink, but by pointing out the latter's errors here and there. Thus, under "marḥam" (ointment)<sup>31</sup>, he says: "al-Jauharī's mention of it under r-ḥ-m is a mistake. The *mīm* is radical, for one says "marḥamtu l-jurḥ" (I put ointment on the wound), whereas if the *mīm* were a letter of increase, one would say "arḥamtu".

<sup>30</sup> For a list see the pages of the *Bulgh* already mentioned.

<sup>31</sup> Vol. IV, 179.

Here let us consider the merits and demerits of the "Qāmūs". First we must accept that the choice of the rhyme order was deliberate and considered. Lane suggests that there is evidence that the "Lāmi" was in the same anagrammatical order as the "Muḥkam". In the entry f-k-h in the "Qāmūs"<sup>32</sup>, in explanation of the word "fākiha" (fruit) we read: "I have shown this at length in the Lāmi". Now we are told that he only completed five of the sixty parts of that work<sup>33</sup>. If he had been using the rhyme order, the root f-k-h would come near the end of the whole work. But in the anagrammatical-phonetic order, it would be nearer the beginning, as hā<sup>2</sup> is a guttural letter<sup>34</sup>. Darwīsh disputes this, and suggests that the number sixty as the expected total number of volumes in the "Lāmi" is either an exaggeration or a copyist's error. He points out that in Khalil's arrangement the chapters become successively shorter: therefore the entry f-k-h (or rather h-k-f) would really occur rather more than a third of the way through. A check of the manuscripts of the "Ain" confirms this. Unless al-Firūzābādī began his "Lāmi", like al-Qālī's "Bāri", with the letter hā<sup>2</sup>, the facts seem irreconcilable. But in any case, he was using as his two major sources one work in the rhyme arrangement—the "Uḇāb", and one on the anagrammatical plan—the "Muḥkam". The alphabetical order of the initial was certainly known to him. Among his works is a book in which he corrected a thousand mistakes in the "Mujmal" of Ibn Fāris<sup>35</sup>, whom he apparently praises. As in the case of Ibn Manẓūr, then, we are bound to believe that he preferred the rhyme order.

The virtues of the "Qāmūs" have been sufficiently indicated—brevity combined with copiousness and clarity; clear indication of vowelling, and the use of abbreviations. Yet some of these very virtues have been turned into vices by his critics. He has been reproached for failing to quote authorities for his words<sup>36</sup>; for including too many technical terms, especially medical<sup>37</sup>; for introducing so many foreign words and placing them under hypothetical roots as if they were Arabic; for filling his work with geographical and other proper names; for omitting words, especially those of Pre-Islamic

<sup>32</sup> IV, 289.

<sup>33</sup> al-Sikhāwī, *op. cit.*, X, 82.

<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of this, see Lane, *Lexicon* I, Preface, xviii; and Darwīsh, 103-104.

<sup>35</sup> Taskoprūzāde, 119; al-Sikhāwī, X, 82.

<sup>36</sup> Ḥamza 241.

<sup>37</sup> Darwīsh 105, and (quoting Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq) 115.



poetry<sup>38</sup>; for obscurity and ambiguity in transcribing from his authorities; for criticising the "Ṣaḥāḥ"; and for an error of judgement in choosing the rhyme arrangement. Of more substance is the criticism, already levelled at the "Lisān", namely, lack of a consistent sequence for dealing with the various derivations, whether nominal or verbal, from any given root. Why, for instance, should he open the root f-k-h with the noun "fākiha", and kh-dh-l with the verb "khaḍhala" (to desert)? There seems to be no logical explanation. But it does seem that in many cases lexicographers merely followed al-Khalil's example in this matter. We often find the same word beginning the entry for a root in the "ʿAin", "Ṣaḥāḥ", and "Qāmūs".

A large-scale commentary on the "Qāmūs"—if the term commentary is allowable—was compiled in Egypt in the Eighteenth Century. It is also the most copious Arabic dictionary—at least as to the total number of entries—ever composed. It is the "Tāj al-ʿArūs" of Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (1732 or 33 A.D. to 1791). A detailed discussion of this work is beyond the scope of the present study. In any case, though accorded fame in the West as the basis of Lane's *Lexicon*, it has never replaced the "Lisān" in Arab estimation as the best large-scale dictionary<sup>39</sup>. In a long introduction, the compiler lists about 500 authors on whom he has drawn to expand the "Qāmūs". Most of the older works are mentioned, including the chief dictionaries—the "Ṣaḥāḥ", "Tahdhīb", "Muḥkam", "Nihāya", "ʿUbāb", "Takmila fī l-Ṣaḥāḥ", "Asās al-Balāgha", "Jamhara" and "Mujmal". The "Lisān" is also included, but Lane<sup>40</sup> has pointed out that a large proportion of the material additional to the "Qāmūs" is word for word the same as the "Lisān". He says: "I cannot, therefore, acquit the Seyyid Murtaḍā of a want of candour, and of failing to render due honour to the one of the most laborious of compilers, by not stating either that the Tāj al-ʿAroos was mainly derived in the first instance from the Lisān al-ʿArab (which I believe to have been the case), or that the contents of the former are mostly to be found in the latter". The method of the author of the "Tāj" was to put the contents of the "Qāmūs" in brackets, interpolating commentary material. The latter consists of amplification of definitions, the mention of authorities or "ruwāḥ", illustrative quotations—though not as many of the latter as in the larger earlier dictionaries, the inclusion of additional words under roots

<sup>38</sup> Hamza, 241.

<sup>39</sup> See Lane, *Lexicon* I, xviii ff.; Darwīsh, 107 ff.; and the Būlāq edition of the "Tāj al-ʿArūs".

<sup>40</sup> Lane, *Lexicon* I, xx.

already to be found in the "Qāmūs", and also entirely new roots. The amateur statisticians tell us that the number of entries is 120,000, as against 80,000 in the "Lisān", 60,000 in the "Qāmūs", and 40,000 in the "Ṣaḥāḥ". Lane tells us that when he went to Cairo to write his Lexicon, he heard of a certain Eastern source which comprised in about one seventh of its bulk the whole contents of the "Qāmūs". This was the "Tāj", and when his search for it was successful, it fully justified his expectations<sup>41</sup>. By this he means that it proved to be as complete and copious as he had expected. But this is the only way in which it surpasses the "Lisān". Moreover there is still no consistency in entering derivatives under their roots.

This was one of the reforms which were needed in Arabic lexicography to which Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq (died c. 1890) drew attention in the Nineteenth Century. He also called for the abandonment of the rhyme order in favour of the normal European alphabetical order which had already been demonstrated by Ibn Fāris and al-Zamakhsharī. Shidyāq has been described as "a many-sided and prolific writer with the inner lining of the journalist"<sup>42</sup>. A lover of the antique, and of *recherché* vocabulary, he was nevertheless one of the pioneers of the modern Arab literary awakening, and one of a long line of Lebanese and Syrian Maronite Christian scholars. He was educated in the American Mission School in Beyrouth, and travelled widely, visiting Istanbul, Malta, Egypt, Tunis, France, and England. Though he came to England at the invitation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, this did not prevent him from turning Muslim. In Egypt he was prominent in journalism, and a contributor to "al-Waqāʿi al-Miṣriya"; in Tunis he founded his paper, "al-Rāʾid", and in Istanbul "al-Jawāʾib". In his book "al-Jāsūs ʿalā l-Qāmūs"<sup>43</sup> (the Spy on the Qāmūs) he voiced his criticisms of the "Qāmūs" in particular, and of Arabic lexicography in general. His main points have already been mentioned, and require no repetition. Yet his own dictionary—if it can be so called—does not carry out the reforms he demanded of others. Entitled "Sirr al-liyāl fī l-badal wa l-ibdāl"<sup>44</sup>, it was designed to support the onomatopoeic theory of the origin of language, and the biliteral foundation of Arabic. This last theory is, of course, well known to those whose study is the common ancestry of Hamitic

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, v-vi.

<sup>42</sup> Huart, *Arabic Literature*, London 1903, 415.

<sup>43</sup> Cairo 1299 A.H. See also Darwīsh, 113-116.

<sup>44</sup> Published Cairo 1284/1867. See Darwīsh 117-118.



and Semitic languages; but it is not always realised that it was a theory followed up by a number of Jesuit scholars in the Lebanon and by Anastasie de St. Élie (al-Ab Anastās al-Karmalī) in Iraq. To press his first theory, the onomatopoeic, Aḥmad Fāris invented a new alphabet, beginning with the guttural letters—hamza, ḥāʾ, khāʾ, ʿAin, ghain and hāʾ, and then continuing with the remainder of the letters, bāʾ, tāʾ, thāʾ and so on, in their normal order. To support his second theory, the biliteral origin of the language, he enters his roots under biliteral headings, dealing with them anagrammatically. Thus, *kataba* comes under the heading t-k. Perhaps al-Shidyāq would have defended the seeming inconsistency between words and deeds on the grounds that “*Sirr al-liyāl*” was not a dictionary in the accepted sense, but an exposition of linguistic theory. He was important as a pioneer of philological research carried out into Arabic by Arabs in the modern era. Backward-looking in returning to al-Khalīl’s anagrams, he had yet made the clarion call for a sensible dictionary arrangement in Arabic, suitable to modern needs. In the next chapter we shall verify that this implied no slavish imitation of the European, but going back to the experiments of certain Medieval Arabic lexicographers.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE MODERN DICTIONARY ARRANGEMENT

When al-Khalīl began the "Kitāb al-ʿAin", he was perfectly well aware that the Arabic alphabet, in its conventional order, began with alif—or hamza. We have seen how his scientific mind prevented him from using that order. Moreover, having mathematical leanings, he was determined not inadvertently to omit any Arabic roots from his work, and he perhaps felt that he could best ensure this by his anagrammatical or permutative method. But a contemporary of his, Abū ʿAmr Ishāq ibn Mirār al-Shaibānī, wrote a dictionary, or perhaps more accurately a vocabulary—the "Kitāb al-Jīm"—in which he foreshadowed the modern dictionary arrangement. He was, perhaps, the initiator of a system whereby words were grouped in chapters according to their first radical letters, but within these chapters, there was apparently no logical order. It is significant that Abū ʿAmr belonged to the Kufan school of Grammarians and lexicographers, while al-Khalīl belonged to the more orthodox Basran. Too much stress has probably been laid on the differences between these two rival schools, especially since, by the time philological studies really got "under weigh", Baghdad was the capital of the Islamic Empire, and it was there that scholars flocked, whatever their viewpoint. But the terms "Basran" and "Kufan" applied to linguistic studies do represent differences of approach, nevertheless. In brief, "Basran" tended to imply analytical, logical, and theoretical, while "Kufan" implied a more practical approach. Even scholars who had never studied in either place, could trace back a kind of genealogical table of teaching handed down to themselves from one or other of these two seats of learning. The Kufans tended to accept what they heard—whether directly or indirectly—from the Bedouin Arab, rather than what fitted into the known pattern of the language<sup>1</sup>. In the terminology of the Greeks and of Varro, the Basrans were the Analogists, the Kufans the Anomalists.

<sup>1</sup> For a full account of the Kufan School, see Dr. Madhī al-Makhzūbī, *Maḍrasat al-Kūfa*, Baghdad 1955.



Abū ʿAmr was a native of Kūfa, but settled in Baghdad<sup>2</sup>. He was named after the *Shaibān* tribe because he lived with them to learn pure Arabic, or, according to another story, because he taught their children. He lived to a grand old age, retaining all his faculties to the last. He died in 213<sup>3</sup> aged 118<sup>4</sup>. In his studies, he specialised in Ḥadīth, poetry, and lexicography. His reliability was questioned because he was a wine-bibber, and because he was a Kufan. The modern Egyptian writer, Ṭaha Ḥusain, includes him, with *Khalaf al-Aḥmar*, and *Ḥammād al-Rāwīya*, among the forgers of Pre-Islamic poetry<sup>5</sup>. Abū ʿAmr's leanings were towards dialect and rare words. We are told that he went out into the desert among the true Arabs, taking two jars of ink with him: he did not return until they were used up. He was interested in what we would call "folk poetry", and collected the *dīwāns* of a hundred or more Arab tribes. It is said that these collections were hung in the mosque in Kūfa; but this story is as improbable as the one from which it must have been copied—that the "*Muʿallaqāt*" were hung in the Kaʿba at Mecca. He had previously studied ancient poetry under al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī, the collector of the "*Mufaḍḍaliyāt*". His other works include many short lexicographical treatises with titles familiar at that time—"The Palm", "The Camel", "Characteristics of Man". As an adjunct, no doubt, to his poetical collections, he wrote his large dictionary or vocabulary, the "*Kitāb al-Jīm*". Considerable mystery has, in the past, surrounded this work and its title. The "*Fihrist*"<sup>6</sup> calls it "*Kitāb al-Nawādir* known as *Kitāb al-Jīm*", and also mentions a "*Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*" (book of expressions, letters or dialects). Abū l-Ṭayīb mentions both a "*Nawādir*" and a "*Jīm*", and adds: "He taught the former, but not the latter, for he was mean with people over it, and no-one studied it under him"<sup>7</sup>. Qiftī says<sup>8</sup>: "And Abū ʿAmr composed the book of "*Ḥurūf*" in language, calling it "*Kitāb al-Jīm*". Later he called it "*al-lughāt*" (dialects, expressions)". Ibn *Khallikān* calls it<sup>9</sup> "*Kitāb*

<sup>2</sup> For biographical details, see Abū Tayīb, *Marātib al-Nahawīyīn*, 91-92; Zubaidī, 211-212; Qiftī I, 221-229; Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuḥat al-Alibbāʾ*, 120-125; Ibn *Khallikān*, I, 182-3; *Fihrist*, 101-2.

<sup>3</sup> 206/821-2 and 210/825 are also given by some authorities as the date of his death.

<sup>4</sup> Or aged 110, or 102, according to some.

<sup>5</sup> In *Fī l-ʿAdab al-Jāhili*, 1926 and subsequent editions, Cairo.

<sup>6</sup> 102.

<sup>7</sup> 91.

<sup>8</sup> I, 224.

<sup>9</sup> I, 182.

al-Jīm" and "al-Lughāt". The late distinguished scholar F. Krenkow was interested in this work, which had long been a mystery, especially since its strange title was reminiscent of "Kitāb al-ʿAin". He learned that there was a copy in the Escorial Library in Madrid. Writing in the article "al-Shaibānī" in the "Encyclopedia of Islam" in 1934<sup>10</sup>, he said: "The book is not a lexicon... though in a rough way the words are arranged in four chapters commencing with the first four letters of the alphabet... The particular value of the book lies in the fact that it is a large collection of expressions peculiar to certain tribes: on the first 27 pages there are no less than 30 different tribes mentioned, and there is not the least doubt that Abū ʿAmr extracted the unusual words from the 80 old diwāns of Arab tribes which he had collected". He added that the book contained poetical quotations not to be found in the "Lisān", and was "the greatest monument of the Kufic school of grammarians". He also expressed the intention of editing it. However, I have ascertained that the prospective publishers, the Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniya in Hyderabad, India, received none of the text from him. There have been rumours of intended publication in Egypt.

Krenkow's account is correct save in one respect<sup>11</sup>. The book is not confined to the first four letters of the alphabet, but runs through the whole 28 from alif to yāʾ. The manuscript is in 287 double pages or leaves, with about 400 words per page<sup>12</sup>—and is thus considerably smaller than the "ʿAin". Words occur in the chapter appropriate to their initial radicals, but within these chapters there is no logical order. Thus the first chapter begins with "awq", "afiq" and "azūh". In the kha<sup>3</sup> chapter, the first word is "takḥniya", verbal noun of "khannā". Then come words from the roots kh-ṭ-f, kh-w-ṭh, kh-l-f, kh-b-b, and kh-f-w. No attempt is made to explain several words under any root—it is only the word occurring in the poem quoted in which the author is interested. It would seem that Abū ʿAmr made notes of difficult words in his diwāns, and then rearranged them under the initial letters of their roots, but did not trouble to sort them out any further. The "Jīm" is only a dictionary in the sense that early

<sup>10</sup> Vol. IV, page 271.

<sup>11</sup> I am indebted to the Director of the Escorial library for supplying a microfilm of this MS, which is number 572. For a further account of the book, see ʿAttār, Introductory volume to the 1956 edition of the "Ṣaḥāḥ" of al-Jauharī, pp. 71-76.

<sup>12</sup> This is only a rough estimate. Some later pages are in smaller handwriting than the earlier ones.



Sanskrit and Greek lexicographical works can claim that title—it is a tabulated collection of obscure poetical words. One may well ask which came first, the “‘Ain” or the “Jīm”<sup>13</sup>, which was the first dictionary-compiler in Arabic, Abū ‘Amr or al-Khalīl? While al-Khalīl died first, the other lived to a much greater age, and was his contemporary, therefore. But the discussion is hardly worth while—especially to the non-Arab who is neither a hero-worshipper of al-Khalīl nor pro-Basran in matters philological. For al-Khalīl’s work was a scientific attempt to record the whole vocabulary-content of Arabic, while Abū ‘Amr’s served a much more limited purpose—it was a piece of apparatus for poetical commentary. Moreover, he failed to make full use of the alphabetical principle; and thus, though his plan is potentially simpler than al-Khalīl’s, it is a much more laborious business to find a word in the “Jīm” than it is in the “‘Ain”, once one has grasped the latter’s system.

There remains the question as to why the title “Jīm” came to be used. Qifṭī<sup>14</sup> tells us that Abū ‘Amr did not explain the meaning of the title: certainly not in the Escorial manuscript. Perhaps this was added later. Perhaps it was just an attempt by the author, or his pupils, or later Kufan scholars, to show that if the Basrans had their “‘Ain”, the Kufans had their “Jīm”! And after all, the title “Kitāb al-‘Ain” is equally mystifying at first sight. Perhaps the work was called or known as “Kitāb alif bā‘ jīm” (The A-B-C-Book), and was abbreviated. Perhaps it was named after the first volume of the book—the only one which Krenkow seems to have seen—which comprises the letters alif, bā‘, tā‘, thā‘, jīm. (There are ten books or volumes in all). We have seen that the book had other names—ḥurūf, lughāt and probably nawādir. Certainly the work will repay detailed study, and it is to be hoped that the rumoured edition materialises.

To add to the mystery of the title, there are at least two other lexicographical works mentioned called “Jīm”. One “Kitāb al-Jīm” is said to have been compiled by Shāmīr ibn Ḥamdawaih al-Harawī (of Herat). He died in 255/869, that is, 40 or 50 years after Abū ‘Amr<sup>15</sup>. He left his home to study in Iraq, under pupils of Abū ‘Amr. Returning home, he wrote a large book arranged alphabetically beginning with the letter jīm, the like of which—we are told—had never been seen

<sup>13</sup> ‘Attār, *op. cit.*, 72-3.

<sup>14</sup> I, 224.

<sup>15</sup> See Yāqūt IV, 262-3; Al-Azhārī, *Introduction to the Tahdhīb*, in “Monde Oriental”, Vol. XIV, 1920, pp. 24-5; and *Bughya*, 266-7.

before. It was devoted to the elucidation of difficult words in the Qurān and the Ḥadīth. According to al-Azhārī, the book, while unparalleled in richness, was overloaded with quotations from poetry, and with Quranic and Ḥadīth commentary. However, Shamir was mean with it, and would not teach it to anyone. After his death, the sole copy fell into the water while being carried across a river. Al-Azhārī claimed to have seen and copied a few of the earlier pages, and to have found it “*‘alā ghāyat al-kamāl*”. It is dangerous to be dogmatic in questioning the existence of an Arabic book—fifty years ago, one might have questioned the veracity of the stories concerning the “*Jīm*” of Abū ‘Amr. Lost manuscripts have a habit of turning up. Nevertheless, the story has a familiar ring! And we are entitled to wonder what strange Arabic alphabet could be devised beginning with *jīm*?! It does seem as if some story-teller had heard of Abū ‘Amr’s work, jumped to the erroneous conclusion that it began with the letter *jīm*, and then attributed a similar work to Shamir. Al-Suyūṭī attributes a “*Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*” to him, and this may be the same work.

A third “*Kitāb al-Jīm*” is ascribed by the “*Fihrist*” to al-Naḍr ibn Shumail<sup>16</sup>, a pupil of al-Khalīl.

Abū ‘Amr’s method, then, was to classify words in 28 chapters according to their initial radicals, taking the normal alphabetical order. Within these chapters he listed words either haphazardly, or according to some criterion not yet known to us. Not for two centuries did anyone develop his system to its logical conclusion, the modern dictionary arrangement. But, while compilers of major lexicons pursued al-Khalīl’s anagrams, and even after al-Jauharī established the rhyme order firmly in the favour of expert and general reader alike, Abū ‘Amr’s system continued in use in certain specialised vocabularies. Indeed, it might be considered a fourth type of Arabic dictionary arrangement—we might even call it the “*Kufan method*”. For example, in the Tenth Century there lived a scholar in the direct descent of Kufan philological teaching, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ibn Aḥmad ibn Uzair al-Sijistānī (died 330/941). Little is known about him<sup>17</sup>, but his “*Kitāb Gharīb al-Qurān*”, a small dictionary of hard expressions in the Qurān, has survived. He uses the same arrangement as Abū ‘amr, save that he divides each chapter into three—where necessary—one for each

<sup>16</sup> 63.

<sup>17</sup> See Josef Feilchenfeld, *Ein einleitender Beitrag zum Garīb-al-Kuran*, Vienna 1892; also *Kitāb Gharīb al-Qurān*, Cairo 1325 A.H. This Sijistānī must not be confused with the earlier, and more famous, philologist, Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī.



vowel. He therefore has chapters for hamza with fatha, hamza with damma, hamza with kasra; bā<sup>3</sup> with fatha, bā<sup>3</sup> with damma, and so on. Within these chapters words are not even placed according to their roots, but according to the actual form in which they occur in the Qurān. At first sight, arrangement seems quite haphazard within these chapters. But a closer examination shows that they are really listed in the order in which they occur in the text of the Qurān, even though the author does not quote sūra and verse numbers for the words. For example, under "khā<sup>3</sup> with damma" we find successively "khuṭuwāt al-shaiṭān" (sūra II, verse 168); "khullā" (II, 254); "khuwār" (VII, 148); and "khumruhunna" (XXIV, 31). Obviously the author, in reading the Qurān, picked out and explained every difficult expression as he came to it, in commentary technique, and then rearranged his notes in chapters according to initial letters and vowels, without otherwise disturbing their order. There should, in fact, be twenty-eight times three chapters. But not all these are required, and there is, on the other hand, a special chapter for words beginning with lām-alif, which the Arabs for some illogical reason sometimes treated as a distinct and separate letter. Such a dictionary as this could be consulted without undue trouble during the course of a complete reading of the Qurān from cover to cover spread over a few days—as was often done. But it would not be quite so easy to check a word afterwards, or if one lost one's place.

At about the same time, Ibn Wallād (died 332/943) wrote his "Kitāb al-Maqṣūr wa l-Mamdūd", a treatise on words ending in alif, whether followed by hamza or not. Here, too, words are listed haphazardly under their initial letters, from alif to yā<sup>3</sup>. But here again, there are subdivisions of the chapters, which somewhat mitigate the inconvenience. These subdivisions are not followed with complete consistency for all letters; they include sections for such matters as "words which can be spelled with either alif maqṣūr or alif mamdūd, but with a difference in meaning"; the same, with no difference in meaning; the maqṣūr which has no similar mamdūd; the mamdūd which has no similar maqṣūr; and so on. At the end of the book, there are chapters showing how to form the dual and plural of the words concerned.

More famous than either of the above is the "Kitāb al-mu'arrab" (A dictionary of Arabicised words) by al-Jawālīqī (466/1073-529/1134)<sup>18</sup>. It is remarkable that al-Jawālīqī should have thought

<sup>18</sup> See Ibn Khallikān, III, 498-502; and *Gawaliki's Almuarrab*, edited Sachau, Leipzig 1867.

Abū 'Amr's method still suitable for a specialised vocabulary, for the "Ṣaḥāḥ" was well known and widely used in his day. Moreover, Ibn Khallikān tells us that he was "a learned scholar, and a master of all branches of literature... A number of instructive works were composed by him and got into wide circulation... Pieces in his handwriting were much sought after, and people vied with each other in bidding to obtain them". He was a native of Baghdad. His "mu'arrab" was recognised as the best and most complete study of the subject. It has been repeatedly quoted by Arabs and Europeans alike. The whole subject of foreign words in Arabic in the Medieval period and before is interesting, but it is not strictly relevant to the present work.

As an example of a briefer book on this plan, we may mention a "Kitāb al-Aḍḍād" by the grammarian Abū Muḥammad ibn Dahhān (died 569/1173) <sup>19</sup>. Arabic literature contains many such books dealing with words having opposite meanings. Most of them are vocabularies in no special order <sup>20</sup>. Ibn Dahhān was described as the Sibawaihi of his time, and one of the four greatest grammarians of his age. He lived in Iraq, and went blind through trying to fumigate his books, which had acquired a foul smell through becoming soaked in water! The "Kitāb al-Aḍḍād" is considerably shorter than the average book on the subject. It occupies only 16 pages in the printed copy, and lists about 300 words. Definitions are as brief as possible, and no examples are included.

At the end of the Tenth Century, the honour of introducing the modern dictionary arrangement into Arabic—albeit with minor, though irritating, variations, fell to a truly great lexicographer, Ibn Fāris—Abū l-Ḥusain Aḥmad ibn Fāris al-Rāzī ibn Zakariyā (died 390/1000) <sup>21</sup>. Darwish suggests that the arrangement was not invented by Ibn Fāris, but by the Ḥadīth writers <sup>22</sup>. Al-Bukhārī, he states, arranged the names of transmitters of ḥadīths in the normal alphabetical order, but he only took the initial into consideration. But we have also seen this, the Kufan method, used from Abū 'Amr al-

<sup>19</sup> Published in *Nafā'is al-Makhṣūṣāt*, First collection, Baghdad 1372/1953.

<sup>20</sup> See August Haffner, *Drei Arabische Quellenwerke über die Addād*, Beyrouth 1913.

<sup>21</sup> Several other dates are given for his death: 360, 365, 375 and 395; but 390 is the most likely. The following contain biographical and other material concerning him: Qifī, I, 92-95; Yāqūt II, 6-15; Ibn Khallikān, I, 100-2; *Bughya*, 153; Darwish, 121-125; and the prefaces to the Cairo editions of Ibn Fāris's *Muḥmal* and *Maḡāyir*, both dated 1366/1947. His *Ṣaḥībī fī Fiḥ al-luḡa* was published in Cairo in

<sup>22</sup> 121.



Shaibānī onwards. However, it is not without relevance that Ibn Fāris was said to follow the Kufan method in grammar. Opinions differed as to the birthplace of Ibn Fāris. Certainly it was somewhere in Persia. Qazwīn was mentioned because he spoke the dialect of that town; also Rastāq al-Zahrā (or a nearby village); and Hamadānī. The latter is probably correct. We do not know the date of his birth. He studied at first in his home town, under his father and others; then in Qazwīn, in Zinjān, and in Syria. He devoted himself to jurisprudence (fiqh) and lexicography, and never ceased to stress the importance of philological studies for the juriconsults. He spent the last years of his life in Rai, where he was tutor to Majd al-Daula, son of the Buwihid ruler Fakhr al-Daula (reigned 366/976-387/987). Here he met the Ṣāhib ibn ʿAbbād, whom we mentioned as the author of the "Muḥīṭ". The latter richly regarded him, and also became his pupil. Unfortunately, however, Ibn Fāris was a passionate supporter of the Arab viewpoint in the *shuʿūbiya* controversy, and for this he incurred the displeasure of his patron and pupil. On one occasion, Ibn Fāris wrote a typical short philological treatise entitled "Kitāb al-Ḥajāra" (Book of Stone). On receiving it, Ibn ʿAbbād said to his entourage: "Return the stone whence it came!" And he gave a somewhat meagre reward to the author. Many were Ibn Fāris's distinguished pupils, including Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadānī. Indeed, he was credited with the invention of the Maqāma form which his pupil made so famous, in a book entitled "al-Ṭayībīya". His works form a long list, and are almost entirely philological, except for a few on the religious sciences. He also wrote much poetry which is now forgotten. Among his religious works were a commentary on the Qurān, a life of the Prophet, "The Character of the Prophet", and "Principles of Jurisprudence". Half religious, half philological were "Explanation of the Names of the Prophet" and "Strange iʿrāb in the Qurān". Among his philological monographs were "Storehouses of words", "The Stone", "Night and Day", "Paternal and Maternal Uncles", "Human Qualities", and "Itbāʿ and Izdiwāj". Finally, he wrote two major dictionaries, "al-Mujmal fī l-lughā" and "Maqāyīs al-lughā"; and a valuable philological treatise, "al-Ṣāhibī fī Fiqh al-lughā".

The "Ṣāhibī" was so named as it was written for his patron, the Ṣāhib ibn ʿAbbād for the latter's library<sup>23</sup>. It is not a long work, but in it, the author sought to explain the basic principles of all aspects

<sup>23</sup> Yāqūt, II, 7.

of philological study. It is therefore a kind of encyclopedia of Arabic lexicography, and as such is a forerunner, and obviously a major source, of al-Suyūṭī's more celebrated "Muzhir". And there is this to Ibn Fāris's credit: he is not a quarter so longwinded as al-Suyūṭī, and does not bore the reader with unduly long word-lists. Beginning by discussing such matters as "the origin of the Arabs' learning", "is the Arabic language God-given or man-made?", "who wrote the first Arabic script?", "Abū l-Aswad the first grammarian", "Arabic the best and broadest of languages", "different dialects of the Arabs", and so on, he goes on to discuss many features of Arabic—parts of speech, the particles, metaphor, the use of the singular for the plural, lengthening of derived verb forms to give intensive meanings, and many others. Perhaps one day some scholar will make a detailed study of this work, in conjunction with the "Muzhir".

Ibn Fāris's use of the word "fiqh" in connection with language is interesting. It was taken up in the following century by al-Thaʿālabi, in his "Fiqh al-lughā". The latter work, which we shall discuss later <sup>24</sup>, is, however, of a different type, being a classified vocabulary. We have seen that Ibn Fāris stressed the importance of philological study for jurists. This may have been at the back of his mind when he chose the title for his work. But I feel sure that he also intended to suggest that lexicography was as scientific and organised a science even as "fiqh", the Muslim science par excellence. When we turn to his two dictionaries, we shall find a strongly logical and scientific approach. He had already written a treatise "Kitāb al-thalātha" (The Book of the Three), in which he collected trilateral roots in which the three letters appeared to hide a basic meaning, whatever the order in which they occurred. His contemporary, Ibn Jinnī, who lived in Baghdad, dealt with the same subject. In his "Khaṣāʾiṣ" <sup>25</sup> he envisaged a "major derivation", according to which any group of three consonants had, by their very conjunction in whatever permutation, a fundamental significance. This was, of course, a sort of philological "dead end". But the preoccupation with radicals which it shows played an important part in Ibn Fāris's two dictionaries.

Both books are on the same plan. There are 28 main divisions, or "books", one for each letter of the alphabet. All roots beginning with bāʾ, for example, come in "Kitāb al-bāʾ". Thus the initial radical is the criterion. Each book is subdivided into three sections, though they

<sup>24</sup> Chapter 9.

<sup>25</sup> Published Cairo, 1897. Vol. only, 1331 A.H.



are not so named: first come the biliterals, that is, doubled roots like "balla". The "Muṭābaq"—that is, the doubled biliteral quasi-quadriliteral—roots such as "balbala"—are dealt with at the same time. Second come trilateral roots. Last come roots of more than three letters, but they are jumbled together in no particular order. In the first two sections, roots are arranged in the order of their second (and third) radicals, as in a modern dictionary, with this exception. Ibn Fāris thought of the letters of the alphabet as forming the circumference of a circle, round which movement was possible in only one direction—let us say, clockwise. Thus in dealing with biliteral roots beginning with  $rā^2$ , for instance, he could not begin with  $r$ -hamza,  $r$ -b,  $r$ -t,  $r$ -th, and so on. He had first to begin with  $r$ -z, as  $zāy$  was the next letter after  $rā^2$ , then  $r$ -s,  $r$ -sh, and so on, to  $r$ -y, and then back to the beginning (continuing round the circle) to  $t$ -hamza,  $r$ -b,  $r$ -t,  $r$ -th,  $r$ -j,  $r$ -h,  $r$ -kh,  $r$ -d, and  $r$ -dh. As he followed this plan for the third radical also in trilaterals, some mental alertness is required in looking words up, for one must remember whether each successive radical comes before or after the previous one, in the alphabet. We can, perhaps, be grateful that he gave up the unequal struggle and abandoned logic for the quadriliteral and quinquiliteral. Probably this peculiar idiosyncrasy in applying the modern alphabetical order, plus his perpetuation of al-Khalil's separation of roots according to the number of their radicals, and the confusion in the quadri- and quinquiliteral, had much to do with the neglect of both his dictionaries and his system. His dictionaries were more honoured than used. Still, he had made a move in the right direction, if only later lexicographers had eyes to see.

The "Mujmal" was the more famous of the two dictionaries, though only the first volume has been printed, whereas the "Maqāyis" has appeared in full. In the firstnamed, in his introduction, Ibn Fāris stated that as Arabic was so rich a language, he would confine himself to the usage of his time, and omit rarities. This shows a new attitude to the dictionary, and sounds distinctly modern. His definitions are commendably brief, and examples are kept within reasonable proportions. Entries are very short—usually a few lines only, and only handful of derivatives are mentioned under each root. The work is thus not a complete dictionary, and could never replace the "Qāmūs", or even the "Ṣaḥāḥ". With all its merits, then, it is now largely a museum piece. The same can be said of the "Maqāyis". The title actually means measures or scales (as in the scale of a map),

but it has been maintained that Ibn Fāris meant "derivations" by the word <sup>26</sup>. The work is somewhat longer and fuller than the "Mujmal". Again, the aim is not to define all the derivatives of the various roots. The main purpose is to indicate for each root a basic meaning pattern—or more than one, in many cases. For example, he says that the letters w-ḍ-ʿain signify lowering, used of putting something on the earth, or of a woman giving birth to a child. The whole entry takes only ten lines of print, and apart from the root verb form, and one verbal noun, only three other derivations are mentioned. And this is one of the commonest roots, with many derivatives, as any modern dictionary will show. Ibn Fāris shows great ingenuity in tracing the basic meanings of roots, but, as we have mentioned, he was often compelled to postulate two. For example, under q-ṣ-r, he gives the meanings of 'something failing to achieve its full extent, and also confinement or restriction <sup>27</sup>. Occasionally he is quite baffled, and has to admit that there is no basic meaning—as in the root q-ṭ-r <sup>28</sup>.

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that Ibn Fāris was the most original mind in Arabic lexicography since al-Khalīl. He was not the best dictionary compiler: this is quite another matter. As with al-Khalīl, his originality was a hindrance as well as a help. It is arguable that the labour of writing a dictionary is only for hacks!! The full fruits of his efforts came later with al-Zamakhsharī. Moreover his lesson on the importance of roots in Arabic was not forgotten. He was a scholar and researchist in the truest sense: and it is fitting to end this mention of him with the translation of a poem which he wrote: <sup>29</sup>

"They asked me how I was. I said, Well, some things succeed, some fail. When my heart is filled with cares, I say: One day perhaps they will be dispelled. A cat is my companion, books the friends of my heart, and a lamp my beloved consort".

We cannot be absolutely certain who was the first Arabic writer to apply the modern dictionary arrangement in toto. It may have been Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Harawī (died 400/1010) in his celebrated "Kitāb al-Gharībain", a dictionary of Qurānic and Ḥadīth

<sup>26</sup> See ʿAbd al-Sallām Hārūn's introduction to the Cairo edition of the *Maqāyīs*, I, 39.

<sup>27</sup> Cairo edition, Vol. V, p. 96.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>29</sup> Ibn Khallikān, I, 101.



words. Unfortunately I have not seen a copy, but al-Muṭarrizī, to whom we shall refer, suggests that he copied the plan for his "Mughrib" from it. If this is so, then al-Harawī's book applies the modern principle at least to the initial, second, and final radicals of roots—though not necessarily to the third in the case of quadrilaterals. This point will become clear in due course. After this, the first large dictionary to be arranged definitely in the full modern method was al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī's Quranic dictionary. It is, perhaps, significant that almost all dictionaries so arranged were restricted to religious vocabulary. The system did not, then, affect the main stream of Arabic lexicography, in which the rhyme arrangement was firmly established. The care that must be taken in checking printed editions of old works is well exemplified by the Cairo edition of a little vocabulary by a contemporary of Ibn Fāris. It is entitled "Muṣjam baqīyat al-ashyā" (Dictionary of the remainders of things) and is by Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, a famous and capable writer on rhetoric and style. From it we learn such titbits of information as the fact that "samar" means the remainder of water in a tank, and "samar" the last vestiges of whiteness on water after the sun has disappeared. The work was published in Cairo in 1353/1934<sup>30</sup>, and it is ostensibly in the modern arrangement. It is only when we read the introduction that we realise that not only is a large proportion of the book—shown in brackets—added by the editors; but even what is genuine has been rearranged. The original, we are told<sup>31</sup> was in what we have called the "Kufan" arrangement. One is entitled to question whether this is the correct way to edit old texts.

Another writer of the same period, Ibn Asad al-Bazzāz, wrote a vocabulary of the parts of the human body, which is said to have been "in alphabetical order"—whatever that may mean<sup>32</sup>.

Little is known of Abū l-Qāsim al-Ḥusain al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (died 501/1108). He was the author of a literary anthology, and a book on morals which al-Ghazālī always carried about with him. His dictionary, "Kitāb Mufradāt Alfāz al-Qurān", though limited in scope, fills a fair-sized volume<sup>33</sup>. It is a workmanlike concordance, with illustrations from poetry and the ḥadīth.

If we consider which Arabic lexicographers were more than com-

<sup>30</sup> Edited Ibrāhīm al-Abyan and ʿAbd al-Hafīz Shibli.

<sup>31</sup> Page 24 of the introduction to this edition.

<sup>32</sup> Huart, *Arabic Literature*, 157.

<sup>33</sup> Cairo edition,

pilers, pedagogues and pedants, however worthy and industrious, but also great scholars with original minds, we must give pride of place among those whom we have already mentioned to al-Khalīl and Ibn Fāris. To them must be added a third of the trio—al-Zamakhsharī (Abū l-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī (467/1075-538/1144)<sup>34</sup>. Ibn Khallikān calls him the "greatest master in the sciences of Quranic interpretation, the traditions, grammar, philology and rhetoric... incontrovertibly the first man of the age in which he lived". To have produced a large Quranic commentary, an authoritative grammar still esteemed, a geographical dictionary, and two linguistic dictionaries of substantial proportions, though limited scope—surely this represents a tremendous achievement for one man. But he held unorthodox views, being a Muʿtazilite, and has not received his due measure of fame among Arabs, perhaps for that reason. He was born in the village of Zamakhshar near Khwarizm (modern Khiva) in Transoxiana. He travelled widely, beginning his advanced studies in Bokhara. Later he went to Khurāsān and Iraq, where he learned from various masters in Baghdad. Then he went on the pilgrimage, and stayed some time in the Hedjaz, studying the speech of the pure Arabs<sup>35</sup>. He returned to Khwarizm, but again went to Mecca, where he settled some years and acquired the nickname "Jārallāh" (neighbour of God). He died, however, in his native land. He was obviously a well recognised individualist. He wore a wooden leg (or carried a crutch)<sup>36</sup>, having lost one foot. He always had with him a certificate to show that this was not due to a punishment for some crime—for cutting off limbs was a familiar form of penalty. There are three different stories concerning the loss of that foot. Suyūṭī says that he suffered from abscesses on the leg, and had to have one foot amputated. According to another story, he travelled from his home to Bokhara in the winter, and lost one foot through frostbite. The third explanation, which is ascribed to al-Zamakhsharī himself, relates that as a boy he tied the legs of a sparrow, and unwittingly allowed the bird to fall into a hole. When he tried to pull it out, it lost one leg. His mother was shocked, and in her anger cursed him, saying: "May God cut off your foot in the same way". The curse came true, for he fell off his mount while travelling to Bokhara and the resultant injury necessitated the amputation of one foot.

<sup>34</sup> See Darwīsh, 128ff.; *Bughya*, 309-9; Ibn Khallikān, III, 321-8; Qiftī, III, 265-272.

<sup>35</sup> Qiftī, III, 266.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Khallikān, III, 328.



Al-Zamakhsharī wrote much in the two fields of religion and language. His large commentary on the Qurān, the "*Kashshāf*", is said to have shocked some by its opening: "Praise be to God who created the Qurān". He altered the heretical word "created" to "anzala" (sent down or revealed), or, according to some, by the nondescript word "ja'ala" (did, made, began). Still, despite its Mu'tazilite taint, the "*Kashshāf*" ranks with the commentaries of al-Baidāwī and al-Fakhr al-Rāzī as truly great. Of his geographical dictionary, "*Kitāb al-Amkina wa l-Jibāl wa l-Miyāh*", I cannot speak. His grammar, the "*Mufaṣṣal*", is a classic, characterised by the utmost clarity, and by brevity without the sacrifice of the necessary examples. Perhaps no work of similar scope except al-Zajjājī's "*Jumal*" can compare with it, and it is certainly one of the best Arabic grammars. It has been the subject of many commentaries, of which the longest and most important is Ibn Ya'īsh's "*Sharḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*", printed at Cairo in nine parts<sup>37</sup>. It also forms the basis of Howell's exhaustive Arabic Grammar<sup>38</sup>. His two dictionaries are entitled respectively "*Al-Fā'iq fī Ḡharīb al-Ḥadīth*", and "*Asās al-Balāgha*". We do not know in which order they were composed, but, judging from their arrangement, we may guess that the "*Fā'iq*" came first. As its title suggests, it is a dictionary of strange words in the Ḥadīth. It has been printed in Hyderabad<sup>39</sup> in two volumes, and fills nearly 700 pages. Darwish's statement that he wrote it in the normal alphabetical order ("*rattabahī 'alā ḥasb al-abjadīyat al-'ādiya*") is rather misleading. In fact, the arrangement is, as it were, a half-way-house between the Kufan method and the modern arrangement. The work is divided into 28 books, containing words beginning with the various letters from hamza to yā'. Within these books, words are arranged in chapters according to the second letter of their roots. But in these chapters, the arrangement is either haphazard, or in accordance with some principle of which we are not aware. Perhaps al-Zamakhsharī selected difficult words from some corpus hadithorum, and then arranged them in alphabetical order only as far as the second radical, leaving them otherwise undisturbed. To illustrate this, let us take the book of the letter rā'. There are chapters headed "*al-rā' wa l-hamza*", "*al-rā' wa l-bā'*", "*al-rā' wa l-thā'*", and so on<sup>40</sup>. When we examine "al-

<sup>37</sup> Undated.

<sup>38</sup> In 4 parts, Allahabad, 1883-1911.

<sup>39</sup> In 1324 A.H.

<sup>40</sup> I, 219ff.

rā' wa l-bā'”, however<sup>41</sup>, we find roots dealt with in the following order: r-b-<sup>c</sup>Ain, r-b-hamza, r-b-d, r-b-<sup>c</sup>ain, r-b-ḍ, r-b-b, r-b-<sup>c</sup>ain, r-b-ḍ, and so on. Note that he does not even deal with one root in one place, but splits it up in an apparently careless manner. No doubt some scholar will one day solve the riddle. Knowing al-Zamakhsharī's talents, we cannot believe that the inconsistencies are simply due to chance.

With the “Asās al-Balāgha”<sup>42</sup>, however, al-Zamakhsharī introduced the modern dictionary order in its entirety, listing words under their roots according to the alphabetical order of all their component letters from the first to the last. He compiled this dictionary with a special aim—to distinguish between the literal use of words and the metaphorical (Ḥaqīqa and majāz). He lived in an age when rhetoric was seriously studied by every man claiming to be cultured, the time of ornate rhymed prose. One important feature of such prose was the considerable employment of words in their metaphorical meanings, as in al-Ḥarirī's Maqāmāt. In the “Asās”, each entry is divided into two parts. The first gives ordinary meanings: the second, introduced by the formula “wa min al-majāz” (and metaphorically). There are examples from the Qurān, the Ḥadīth, poetry, and proverbs. Thus, under z-w-d<sup>43</sup>, as a metaphorical usage we find “al-taqwā khair zād” (fear of God is the best provision). Under r-b-ṭ<sup>44</sup>, the first section begins with the ordinary meaning of the verb “rabāṭa”, to tie, used of tying a beast. The metaphorical section begins with the Quranic usage “rabāṭa l-lāhu ‘alā qalbihi” (meaning God gave him patience or endurance). Al-Zamakhsharī tells us in his introduction that he is interested in how words are used by men of genius. He was interested in words as parts of constructions, not as isolated units of meaning. Thus, many compound forms are to be found in the work. For example, we find under r-b-ṭ “rajul rābiṭ al-ja‘sh”, or rabīṭ) (a stronghearted man)<sup>45</sup>. Not that the better-known lexicographers failed to give many of such expressions: but in the “Asās” they became the main *raison d'être* of the work, while elsewhere they had been purely incidental. In order to achieve his purpose without prolixity, al-Zamakhsharī adopted two courses. Firstly, he made no attempt to give a comprehensive account of the various derivations of any particular root. Secondly, he omitted rare roots: quadrilaterals and quinquilaterals are hardly

<sup>41</sup> I, 220.

<sup>42</sup> Published Cairo 1953, edited Amīn Khawli.

<sup>43</sup> Page 151.

<sup>44</sup> 197.

<sup>45</sup> 102.



included at all. For this reason, the "Asās" would not be a satisfactory aid to the understanding of Arabic poetry—particularly that of the Jāhiliya and the Ommeyyad period. Yet it is a remarkable work for its era. The author almost saw words as living organisms, with lives of their own which were affected by the use made of them, especially by writers of genius. So he made a point of quoting late authors, including these of his own time. And as a lexicographer, he had discovered the only really simple arrangement possible.

One other work of his deserves mention—his Arabic-Persian Dictionary<sup>46</sup>, and this, too, was something of a pioneer work. E. G. Browne mentions<sup>47</sup> that al-Zauzanī, (died 1093 A.D.) whose commentary on the Muʿallaqāt is often used in Arab countries today, compiled two Arabic-Persian dictionaries—one of them especially to assist the reading of the Muslim scriptures. Whether these have survived, I do not know. Elsewhere, Browne expresses surprise that, though an opponent of *shuʿūbiya* who considered the Arabs superior to the Persians, al-Zamakhsharī should yet have compiled such a dictionary. There is nothing strange in this, for his dictionary would surely help his countrymen to understand Arabic better.

After al-Zamkhsharī, the modern dictionary arrangement continued to be used by compilers of lexicons of religious vocabulary, and by those who abridged the large-scale dictionaries. There are two famous examples of the first category. The more celebrated is the "Nihāya fī Gḩarib al-Ḥadīth"<sup>48</sup> by Majd al-Dīn Abū l-Saʿādat al-Mubārak ibn al-Aṭhīr (440/1149-606/1210), the brother of the well-known historian Ibn al-Aṭhīr<sup>49</sup>. He studied, in particular, grammar and Ḥadīth, and entered the service of the Prince of Mosul. At an advanced age, he suffered from paralysis of the hands and feet, and it was then that he produced most of his literary work. The "Nihāya" is a dictionary of difficult words in the Ḥadīth, arranged in the modern alphabetical order. Unfortunately, the author did not always distinguish letters of increase from radicals in his arrangement. For example, "adjal", plural "ajādil", a superlative form, meaning a hawk, comes after the root hamza-j-d. After defining it, the author says "and the hamza in it is a letter of increase"<sup>50</sup>. But such errors in arrangement are rare, and

<sup>46</sup> Edited Wetzstein, Leipzig 1884. We shall discuss this work in greater detail when discussing Persian lexicography in Chapter 10.

<sup>47</sup> *Literary History of Persia* II, 356.

<sup>48</sup> Published Cairo 1322/1904, in 4 parts.

<sup>49</sup> See *Bughya*, 385-6; Ibn Khallikān, III, 541ff.; Taykoprüzade, 123-4.

<sup>50</sup> Part I, 20-21.

might even be justified as being a help to the tiro. All-in-all, the "Nihāya" is a most efficient book within its limited scope.

The last great Ḥadīth dictionary of this period is the "Mughrib" of Abū l-Faṭḥ Nāṣir al-Muṭarrizī (died 609/1213) <sup>51</sup>. Like al-Zamakhsharī, he was a native of Khiva. Like him, he was a Mu'tazilite, and a student of the religious sciences. He was yet another example of the close association of linguistic studies with those of the Ḥadīth and of fiqh. He was born in the year of al-Zamakhsharī's death, and was really, as Ibn Khallikān said, the latter's successor. The "Mughrib" was highly praised by Lane <sup>52</sup>. He said: "It forms a valuable companion and supplement to the other lexicons, and I have constantly consulted it and drawn from it". It is arranged on the modern plan with one odd exception. In the introduction <sup>53</sup>, al-Muṭarrizī states that he had arranged it in the same way as the "Kitāb al-Gharībain" (by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Harawī). But he has based his alphabetical order on the trilateral, and in the case of roots with more than three radicals, he has only taken note of the first, second and final radicals in his arrangement. Consequently there is some little bother in tracing quadrilaterals. For instance, the root f-r-q-ʿain comes between f-r-ʿain and f-r-q <sup>54</sup>; and "qurqūr" comes between q-r-r and q-r-sh <sup>55</sup>. Again, we find on one page the following roots in succession <sup>56</sup>: q-r-f, q-r-ṭ-q, q-r-ṭ-l, q-r-m, q-r-ṭ-m, and q-r-n. But in reality this work is so confined to the trilateral, that such examples are few.

Though al-Zamakhsharī's dictionary arrangement came too late, and in too restricted a field, to oust the firmly-entrenched rhyme-arrangement of al-Jauharī, it was followed by compilers of short and abridged dictionaries for popular use. One of the most famous of these was, until recently, well known to Egyptian scholars—namely, the "Miṣbāḥ al-Munir" by the Egyptian al-Fayyūmī (died 766/1364) <sup>57</sup>. It is full of technical terms of jurisprudence and philology, and makes frequent reference to the earlier lexicographers and their dictionaries. It is lacking in most roots of more than three letters.

Mention has already been made of Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq's call

<sup>51</sup> Published Hyderabad, in 2 vols., 1328 A.H. See also Ibn Khallikān, III, 523-5; and Tasköprüzade 122.

<sup>52</sup> *Lexicon* I, xv.

<sup>53</sup> I, 3.

<sup>54</sup> II, 93.

<sup>55</sup> II, 115.

<sup>56</sup> II, 118.

<sup>57</sup> Darwīsh, 130.



for the abandonment of the rhyme order, and the use of the modern European dictionary arrangement. The Lebanon became a centre of Arabic lexicography in the Nineteenth Century. Indeed it is hardly too great a generalisation about the Arab literary awakening of the last 150 years to say that while, in general, Egypt supplied the creative genius, the Lebanon supplied the scholarship. Today the situation has changed. The Egyptians, guided by such men of genius as Ṭaha Ḥusain, have produced their scholarship: but they have still not produced an Arabic dictionary above the high-school level. The Lebanon's pre-eminence in this sort of work is understandable, when we realise her cultural links with the West—especially with France and America. In 1867/70 the celebrated dictionary "Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ" by the distinguished scholar Buṭrus al-Bustānī, was published<sup>58</sup>, compiled in the modern arrangement. In the introduction, the author stated that the Arab world needed a dictionary so arranged, and that the "Qāmūs", for all its popularity, was hard to use because of its rhyme arrangement. He therefore took all the material of the "Qāmūs", and supplemented it from other lexicographers, using post-classical authors for some of his examples.

This dictionary was highly praised by Arab scholars, and its fame eclipsed that of another dictionary written during the same period—"Aqrab al-Mawārid" by Saʿīd al-Shurṭūnī<sup>59</sup>. This work aimed at restricting itself to the "faṣīḥ" or classical only, in the manner of the "Ṣaḥāḥ". It employed the same modern arrangement as the "Muḥīṭ". The use of abbreviations, begun by al-Jauharī and developed further by al-Firūzābādī, was extended. To represent verb-vowelling, key letters were used to refer to certain model verbs. Thus, the letter nūn after a verb meant that it was vowelled like "naṣara—yanṣuru"; ʿain meant that it was like "qaṭaʿa—yaqṭaʿu"; lām indicated "ʿalima—yaʿlamu", and so on. This meant considerable saving of space. Al-Shurṭūnī also saved space by not mentioning the names of his authorities and their books. Compared with the "Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ", "Aqrab al-Mawārid" is easier to use, because it is more clearly printed, and better set out. Words are not huddled together, and root headings are clearly distinguished. Moreover, al-Shurṭūnī tried to enter words under their roots in a logical order, beginning with simple forms, and passing on to derived forms, according to the letters of increase which they contain.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 131-3.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 134-135.

But we have gone beyond the aim of this study, which is really concentrated on Arabic lexicography as far as the end of the Medieval period. Suffice it to say that in the present century, the beginnings of practical lexicography in the Lebanon have not been followed up with that assiduity and eagerness which one might have expected—or at least, hoped for. There is no modern Arabic equivalent to the Oxford English Dictionary. It is true that in Egypt, the Academy (*Majma' al-lughat al-ʿarabiya*) has planned a new large-scale dictionary on historical principles, using the many notes left by the German scholar, August Fischer, who spent many years in Cairo on this work. But there has been little to show so far, and the project seems to be in abeyance. In fact, the most fruitful modern Arabic lexicographical work has been done by European Orientalists. Yet in Irān, where there is not so glorious a tradition in lexicography, magnificent work is now being done in the compilation of Persian dictionaries. Surely it is high time that the Arabs tackled this problem with urgency and energy, and built a really modern superstructure on the great foundations of the past.



## CHAPTER NINE

### VOCABULARIES

In Chapter One, we postulated two other types of lexicographical book besides the dictionary—the general classified vocabulary, which covers the same ground as the dictionary, but arranges words under subject-headings; and the specialised vocabulary dealing with one subject only. The reader will have noted that this nomenclature is not at all exact, for it begs the question whether a dictionary in a specialised field like al-Muṭarrizī's "Mughrib" should really be called a dictionary or a vocabulary—in fact, whether we are justified in calling any word list which is in some form of alphabetical order a dictionary.

However that may be, we must now make some further reference to vocabularies. We shall leave the question of the short specialised vocabulary, as we have already referred to it<sup>1</sup> when dealing with the successors of al-Khalil. Admittedly this is not very satisfactory, but in so vast a subject as Arabic Lexicography, whose many ramifications seem to extend further the more the scholar studies it, like a horizon advancing ahead of the traveller, the writer has to restrict himself if he is ever to finish his account. So in this book, I have been content to concentrate on the dictionary form, especially the development of its techniques, and to put Arabic lexicography in the context of the history of world lexicography.

But the general classified vocabulary demands further discussion. It consisted of words classified by subject-matter under broad headings—those same headings which were, in many cases, the titles of the short specialised vocabularies or lexicographical monographs which we have already discussed. This genre has been widely used in other languages, as we have seen—in Chinese, Sanscrit, Greek and Latin. There was a constant stream of them in Arabic, side by side with the dictionary form. This stream culminated in the "Mukhaṣṣaṣ" of Ibn Sīdā. A full bibliography of these large vocabularies—sometimes referred to as dictionaries of synonyms—would be of interest, but here we can do no more than sample some of them.

The "Fihrist" describes an early one<sup>2</sup> by al-Naḍr ibn Shumail,

<sup>1</sup> In Chapter 5.

<sup>2</sup> Page 53.

al-Khalil's pupil, entitled "Kitāb al-Ṣifāt". It has not survived, but it is said to have been a large work consisting of several "books" or sections. The first of these dealt with man, his make-up and qualities (*khalq al-insān*); the second, tents, houses, mountains, paths and possessions; the third, camels; the fourth, cattle, birds, sun, moon, night, day, milk, truffles(?), wells, pools, bucket-ropes, buckets, and wine; the fifth, crops, vine, grapes, vegetables, trees, winds, clouds, and rain.

In the century that followed al-Khalil, there were many lexicographers who did not compile dictionaries—which they might have considered a thankless task. Some of them merely wrote short specialised vocabularies, but others compiled general classified vocabularies. Although these were usually arranged according to subject-matter, as we have already described, some were arranged according to word-forms. Sometimes, both methods were mixed. One of the most famous of the Kufans was Ibn al-Sikkīt (died 236/857), and he used both methods in different works. Perhaps his most famous work is "Iṣlāḥ al-Mantiq" (the correction of speech)<sup>3</sup>. This contains chapters dealing with such subjects as: words which may be vowelised "faʿl" or "fiʿl" with a difference in meaning; similar words with no difference in meaning; triliteral words which can be written with either wāw or yāʾ; hamzated words in which the hamza is dropped in popular speech; words with ṣād which people pronounce with sīn and vice-versa, and so on. A number of later chapters give examples of the various word measures for epithets which resemble the active participle in meaning—such as "faʿīl", "faʿūl", "mifʿīl" and "mifʿāl". Another work by Ibn al-Sikkīt, "Tahdhīb al-Alfāz"<sup>4</sup> is in the more common classification by subject. It commences with wealth and fertility, poverty and barrenness, and passes on by somewhat devious ways, to such subjects as names for the various numbers or quantities of camels, bravery and cowardice, wine, women, sun, moon, time, water, numbers, sorrow, sympathy, sleep, hunger, food, weapons, ornaments, clothes, and words in which the Arabs dropt the hamza.

His pupil, Ibn Qutaiba<sup>5</sup> was a writer on many subjects: history, literary criticism, grammar and philology. In his time, the epistolary prose style was being established, largely under Persian influence,

<sup>3</sup> Cairo, 1949, in the Dhakhāʾir al-ʿArab series.

<sup>4</sup> Edited Louis Cheikho, Beyrouth, 1897.

<sup>5</sup> See the study by Ishāq Musa Huseini, "The Life and Works of Ibn Qutaiba", Beirut 1950.



and Ibn Qutaiba wrote his "Adab al-Kātib" as a guide to the secretary<sup>6</sup>. The arrangement is not particularly logical, but it is based on a mixture of word-measure and meaning. Substantial sections are devoted to words which occur with alternative vowelings—as, for example, "mahāra" or "mihāra" (skill). Ibn Qutaiba's two other famous works, "Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarā" and "and "Uyūn al-akhbār", though full of interesting linguistic material, do not come within the scope of the present study.

A century-and-a-half later, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Iskāfī (died 421/1030) wrote his "Mabādīʾ al-lughā" (principles of philology)<sup>7</sup>. This is fairly logically arranged, beginning with natural phenomena—stars, constellations, time, night and day—and passing on to clothes, implements, food, drink and weapons. Then comes a large section on the horse, and shorter ones on the camel and lion, and other animals; birds; agricultural implements; trees; plants; trade; and illnesses. The final section contains a few rare words illustrated from poetry.

A contemporary of al-Iskāfī, al-Thaʿālabī (died 429) probably named his "Fiqh al-lughā"<sup>8</sup> after Ibn Fāris's "Ṣāḥibī", though it is a very different type of book. It is a vast storehouse of vocabulary which sometimes gives synonyms, and at other times distinguishes between the finer shades of meaning of words which are roughly synonymous. A large number of short sections are grouped under 30 chapters. The interesting penultimate chapter deals with Arabic words which are used in place of their Persian equivalents, and Persian words used in Arabic.

The classified vocabulary reaches the ultimate limit of fullness, exactitude and authoritative-ness in Ibn Sīda's "Mukḥaṣṣaṣ"<sup>9</sup>. This was, to the classified vocabulary, what the "Lisān" was to the dictionary. As we have seen, Ibn Sīda first compiled his dictionary, the "Muḥkam", and then re-arranged the material in it to form the "Mukḥaṣṣaṣ". This shows the different functions of the two types of work. The vocabulary offered material for the writer or orator, who expected to be able to use several different words for the lion, the camel, wheat, and indeed, many well known things. Ibn Sīda was

<sup>6</sup> Published Leiden 1901, edited Max Grünert.

<sup>7</sup> Cairo, 1325 A.H., edited Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn al-Nasʿānī.

<sup>8</sup> Frequently printed, including Paris 1861, edited Rochail Dahdah, as *Fekḥ-el-Logat par le Cheikh Abou Mansour el-Tehalebi*.

<sup>9</sup> Published in 9 books, Būlāq, 1321/1903. See also M. Talbi, *al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ d'Ibn Sīda-Etude, Index*, Tunis, 1956.

well qualified to compile such a vocabulary. Old-fashioned and antiquarian, still clinging to the old system of oral transmission of knowledge, he was a most careful compiler. He was meticulous to state the authority for almost every word and meaning which he gave, and his arrangement is logical. He begins with human beings and the things that concern them—clothes, food, sleep, weapons and fighting. Then he turns to animals and plants; then man in social life—travel, work and play. The final section is concerned with accident and grammar, and various technical linguistic matters—the dual, the plural, masculine, feminine, indeclineables, numbers, “*badal*”, “*aḍḍād*”, the diminutive, the hamza, and alif maqṣūr and mamdūd.

In face of such labour, one can but wonder and admire. To have written *either* the “*Muḥkam*” *or* the “*Mukḥaṣṣaṣ*” was almost a life’s-work: to have written both is little short of a miracle—especially for a blind man!



## CHAPTER TEN

### THE INFLUENCE OF ARABIC LEXICOGRAPHY — THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN EUROPEAN LEXICOGRAPHY — CONCLUSION

It is clear that lexicography was an important and very highly-esteemed branch of Arabic scholarship in the Medieval Period. Not only did it play a large part in the cultural life of the Arabs themselves: it also influenced the lexicography of other Islamic peoples such as the Persians, Turks, and Indians. Again, it was the basis of the Arabic lexicography of European Orientalists like Freytag and Lane. And though it may not have directly influenced the development of modern European lexicography, it was part of the lexicographical background of the Renaissance.

The influence of lexicography on Arabic culture in the Middle Ages is, indeed, a vast subject. At one end of the scale, we have the rather amusing and often attested fact that the errors of the lexicographers and of their copyists were often accepted, and caused new words to be created! At the other end, we see the lore of the "*luḡhawiyīn*" as a vital adjunct of religious literature. Quranic commentaries like that of al-Baiḍāwī (13th. Century A.D.) are full of linguistic information culled from the lexicographers: we have seen also a whole series of specialised Quranic and Ḥadīth dictionaries. In the introduction to his "*Fiqh al-luḡha*", al-Thaʿālābī sums up the importance of Arabic linguistic studies as follows: "Whoever loves God Most High loves His Prophet . . . and whoever loves the Arab Prophet, loves the Arabs. And whoever loves the Arabs loves the Arabic language, in which the most excellent of books was revealed to the most excellent of Arabs and non-Arabs. And whoever loves Arabic (must) busy himself with it, and apply himself assiduously to it . . .". Similarly, lexicography was essential for the study of literature, especially poetry. But for the lexicographers, we might never have had those commentaries on poetry which are essential, even to the Arab himself, for a proper understanding of it. Where would we be, for example, with the "*Muʿallaqāt*", without the commentary of al-Zauzanī and others; or Kaʿb ibn Zuhair's "*Bānat Suʿād*" without Ibn Hishām's; or even al-Mutanabbī without al-ʿUkbarī's. The very list would almost fill a

volume. And in the field of such commentaries, half the material was grammatical or lexicographical. It would, of course, be wrong to think of every Arabic educated household in the Middle Ages as possessing a dictionary—or, perhaps even every library. We know that, until comparatively late, dictionaries were largely for the expert, and were studied primarily not from the manuscript text, but orally from the compiler or his scholastic heirs. Manuscript dictionaries were expensive and hard to come by. The first dictionary of which manuscripts were common was the “*Ṣaḥāḥ*”, and the “*Qāmūs*” was the only “best-seller” dictionary produced. In spite of this we still hear of the “*Qāmūs*” being studied orally under al-Fīrūzābādī. Yet although only the rich man or the expert could afford a dictionary for most of the period under discussion, there is no doubt that Arabic-speakers in general were language-conscious, and there was always a strong conservative influence to preserve and perpetuate the language of the *Qurān* and the *Ḥadīth*. This was due partly to the fact that the *Qurān* and prayers were not, normally, translated. The lexicographers helped to keep the written language static, and to aid the understanding of it, as the spoken dialects diverged more and more from it. So strong were religious sanctions on this point, and so well did the lexicographers do their work, that these spoken dialects were not able to develop into independent languages, as Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and French were able to develop out of Latin.

There is no doubt that Arabic lexicography influenced the compilation of dictionaries in the languages of other Islamic peoples—notably in Persian and Turkish, and perhaps even in Urdu. There are vestiges of Arabic influence in the arrangement of these foreign dictionaries, which were of two kinds: the first consisted of works primarily designed to explain Arabic words used in those languages—hence, translations of the “*Ṣaḥāḥ*” and the “*Qāmūs*”. The second were dictionaries of those languages themselves which show a tendency to get away from the tyranny of Arabic vocabulary, and form part of the revival of the national language.

In Persia, the native language was neglected for some centuries following the Arab conquest. True, Persians played a large part—perhaps a major part—in Arabic literature of all kinds, including grammar and lexicography. But literature in Persian was almost non-existent. From ‘Abbasid times onwards, there was a strong pro-Persian anti-Arab movement called the “*shu‘ūbiya*” movement. Persians began to write serious literature in their own language from the Tenth



Century onwards, and the need was felt to explain the meanings of literary Persian words, especially those used by poets like Firdausī, Rūdakī and Farrukhī. Of the very first Persian dictionaries little is yet known. One is attributed to Abū Hafṣ al-Ṣughdī (died before 200/815), and another to the poet Rūdakī himself (died 304/916). The first extant dictionary is Asadī-i-Ṭūsī's "Lughat-i-Furs"<sup>1</sup>. In a short preamble, Asadī says that it is a dictionary of the language of the people of Balkh, Transoxiana, Khurāsān "wa ghairihim"; that his book is arranged according to the letters of the alphabet. The arrangement used is in the normal alphabetical order of the finals—in other words, al-Jauharī's rhyme order. In this arrangement, non-radical finals are not taken into account—for example, t, h, and y. Thus "ābī" and "niyābah" come in bāb al-bā<sup>c</sup>, and "dastah" in "bāb al-sīn". Within these chapters, arrangement is haphazard, in the Kufan manner. Practically every word is illustrated by a poetical quotation, but these offer no clue to the arrangement, for in bāb al-alif, poets successively mentioned are Rūdakī, Bahrāmī, Khaffāf, Firdausī, Daqīqī (twice), Bahrāmī, Rūdakī, Farrukhī and Firdausī. As this is a glossary of strictly Persian words, there are no chapters for words ending in the Arabic letters th, h, ṣ, ḍ, ṭ, z, ʿain, and q. Gāf and k are classed together, as are j and ch. There is, however, a chapter for the ghain. One word ending in qāf ("azfandāq") is to be found under kāf. Some words are put in the wrong chapter, as "khilm" and "salm" in bāb al-lām<sup>2</sup>. With most entries, a short definition is given, followed by a poetical quotation. But in certain cases, two or three synonyms precede the definition. "Lughat-i-Furs" is really a short specialised vocabulary, but its arrangement shows the influence of al-Jauharī. The compiler, Asadī the Younger<sup>3</sup>, was also the author of a long poem, the "Garshāspnāma", one of many imitations of the "Shāhnāma". This, he concluded in 1066 A.D.

Subsequent Persian dictionaries were mostly written in India<sup>4</sup>. Many of them, beginning with the "Adāt al-Fuzalā" by Qāzī Khān

<sup>1</sup> Published Göttingen 1897, edited Paul Horn; and also Teheran 1957 (*Loqat-e-Fors of Ahmad Asadi Toosi*, edited Mohammad Dhair Syaqi. (Thus on the English Title-page).

<sup>2</sup> Teheran edition, 128.

<sup>3</sup> Browne, *Literary History of Persia* II, 272-4.

<sup>4</sup> See H. Blochmann, *Contributions to Persian Lexicography*, in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Pt. I, no. 1, 1868, pp. 1ff. The account in Paul Legarde's *Persische Studien*, pp. 7-68 is largely a re-hash of Blochmann's article.

Badr Muḥammad (written in 822/1419), are in the modern alphabetical order. But there are variants which suggest that the muddle of Arabic dictionary-arrangement had been taken over—and even made worse. The “*Sharfnāma-i-Ibrāhīmī* of Ibrāhīm Qawwām Fārūqī, written between 1428 and 1435 A.D., arranges words under their first letters, then the finals, then their medials. The “*Madār al-afāzil*” is “somewhat troublesome to use”<sup>5</sup> because in it words are arranged only according to their first and last letters. Most strange of all, perhaps, was the plan of the famous “*Farhang-i-Jahāngīrī*”, finished in 1017/1608 by Ḥusain-i-Anjū, under the patronage of the Mogul Emperor. The main division in chapters is according to the *second* letter of each word. Within these chapters, words are arranged according to their initial, third, and any subsequent letters! It would not be profitable further to pursue the history of Persian lexicography here. The early confusion must surely have reflected Arabic influence; though in India, Sanscrit models, if known, cannot have been helpful. Suffice it to say that the modern alphabetical order was firmly established by a seventeenth-century Indian work, “*Burhān-i-Qāṭi*”, compiled by Muḥammad Ḥusain ibn Khalaf al-Tabrizī, and completed in 1062/1652<sup>6</sup>.

Al-Zamakhsharī's Arabic Persian Dictionary has been mentioned in a previous chapter<sup>7</sup>. It merits further discussion here, because the author did not see fit in it to use the same modern alphabetical order which he used in the “*Asās*”. According to the British Museum Catalogue, the work is divided into five parts (aqsām)—Nouns, Verbs, Particles, Inflexion of Nouns, and Inflexion of Verbs, and Wetzstein's edition is said to consist only of the first two parts. This is hardly correct, as the latter contains also a short third section. Part one contains nouns arranged in chapters according to subject-matter. In each case, the Arabic word is translated succinctly into Persian. (We may also mention here that the preface is translated into Persian sentence by sentence.) This section begins with time, sky, earth, and water, chapters being short, and not without some confusion. Later topics dealt with include plants, gardens, furniture, men, children, women, relatives, religion, occupations, feats, dress, weapons, animals, insects and birds. The end of this section deals with

<sup>5</sup> Blochmann, *op. cit.*, 10.

<sup>6</sup> First edited by Cpt-Roebuck, Calcutta 1818. See Charles Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum* II, page 500, London 1881.

<sup>7</sup> Published as *Samshchcerii Lexicon Persicum*, edited J. D. Wetzstein, Leipzig 1897. Also mentioned in Rieu, *op. cit.*, p. 505.



pronouns, prepositions, and interjections. The second section treats of verbs. There are a number of chapters, each dealing with a particular measure of the verb. It begins with the six alternative vowelings of the simple triliteral verb, listing and translating examples, and then passes on to the various derived forms. Under each measure, there is a further subdivision into the regular, the doubled verb, and verbs with weak initial, medial, and final. Within these subsections, verbs are listed in the rhyme order. The third section is very short, and deals with particles. In view of the above, I have doubts as to the accuracy of the description in the British Museum Catalogue. It is hard to envisage a more complicated plan than this—a mixture of classification by meaning, by word-measure, and the rhyme-order. Perhaps in some way it seemed to al-Zamakhshari to suit the special aims of his book. On the other hand, it may suggest that even a deep-thinker like him was not really sure which arrangement was best.

Until fairly modern times, lexicography in Turkish meant chiefly the explanation of Arabic and Persian vocabulary used in the language—and this, in its turn, meant the translation of Arabic and Persian lexicons. In such works, the order of the original was retained, the definitions being translated into Turkish<sup>8</sup>. An early exception, however, is Kashghari's "Dīwān lughat al-Turk"<sup>9</sup>, written in Baghdad in 466/1032. The author had gone there from his home in Central Asia. This work is of considerable interest to students of Turkish, because of the dialect words included, and for the light it sheds on the development of the Turkic languages. The author writes his words in the Arabic script, and his explanations and definitions are in Arabic. Indeed, the introduction is written in the richest of Arabic rhymed prose. The arrangement—so complex as almost to defy us—shows signs of Arabic influence. The work opens with discussion of word forms, roots, derivations, and letters of increase, and an essay on the Turkic dialects. The unravelling of the arrangement of the dictionary proper would require almost a study in itself. Nouns are separated from verbs, the biliteral is separated from the triliteral, quadriliteral, and so on. The result is a number of subsections: but within these, it does appear that the rhyme arrangement plays some part. It seems as if words are listed according to the initial, then the final, then the

<sup>8</sup> For some lesser known of these, see C. Rieu, *Catalogue of the Turkish Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 1888, pp. 134ff.

<sup>9</sup> Edited Istanbul, 3 vols., 1333-1335 A.H., See also Brockelmann, *Mahmud al-Kashghari über die Sprachen und Stämme der Türken in XI Jhs.*, in *Lőrösi Csoma-Archivum*, Budapest, 1 Kötet, 1 Szám, April 1921.

medials. Even Persian lexicography in India produced nothing quite so complicated as this. The first well-known Turkish translation of the "Şahāḥ" was by Vānqūlī<sup>10</sup>, who died in 1000/1591-2. He worked as a judge in several towns, including Rhodes and Salonica, and was Mulla of Medina at the time of his death. Such was the fame of his "Şahāḥ" that it was among the first books to be printed by the first Turkish printing press, in 1141/1728, and it was reprinted less than 30 years later. The "Qāmūs" was translated two centuries later by Aḥmad ʿĀṣim ʿAintābī (c. 1755-1819 A.D.). Born in Anatolia, he early became fluent in both Arabic and Persian! He entered government service, and won the favour of Sultan Selim III by his translation of the Persian dictionary "Burhān-Qāṭiʿ". He became official historian, and wrote a history of the Ottoman Empire. Then he translated the "Qāmūs" into Turkish. He spent the latter part of his life as a teacher and judge, and died in Scutari. It was here that the "Qāmūs" was published in 1817. He retained the order of his originals, so, whereas his "Burhān" is in the modern alphabetical order, his "Qāmūs" is in the rhyme order. The translations we have mentioned paved the way for modern Turkish lexicography—though the contribution of the foreign Turkish dictionaries of Meninski and Redhouse must not be forgotten.

Chronologically, Hebrew and Syriac lexicography ought to have been mentioned before Persian and Turkish: but with them, Arabic influence, though real, was rather intangible and general in its character. Moreover, influence was probably mutual. The motive in both cases was the understanding of the scriptures, and the preservation of languages which had been ousted by Arabic in everyday speech, and even in science and learning. It is notable that Jewish commentators frequently wrote in Arabic—though they used the Hebrew script.

Hebrew lexicography<sup>11</sup> began effectively with Saadia Gaon (Saʿdīya ibn Yūsuf al-Fayyūmī) (892-942 A.D.)<sup>12</sup>. Though born in Upper Egypt, he settled in Palestine, and also visited Iraq. He was the author of Old Testament commentaries, polemical writings, and gram-

<sup>10</sup> *Encyclopedia of Islam*, first edition, IV, 1121, under Wānqūlī.

<sup>11</sup> See M. Waxman, *A History of Hebrew Literature from the Close of the Bible to our own days*, New York 1938, Vol. I, pp. 167ff. Also Hartwig Hirshfeld, *Literary History of Hebrew Grammarians and Lexicographers*, Oxford 1926.

<sup>12</sup> H. Malter, *Saadia Gaon, his Life and Works*, Philadelphia 1921, and *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1905, Vol. X, 579-586; also, Solomon L. Skoss, *Saadia Gaon, the Earliest Hebrew Grammarian*, Philadelphia 1959.



matical and lexicographical works. He has been described as "the founder of scientific activity in Judaism". His reputation was known to Arab authors such as al-Mas'ūdī and the author of the "Fihrist". He was familiar, no doubt, with Arabic literature; and he knew something about Greek philosophy. But what knowledge of Greek and Arabic lexicography he had precisely we do not know. While still in Upper Egypt, at the age of twenty, he wrote his dictionary, the "Agron". We have already mentioned it as a possible model for Jauhari's "Ṣaḥāḥ". In the first part, words are arranged according to their initial letters "to help writers of poetry to make acrostics". In the second part, the rhyme order is used "to facilitate the making of rhymes". The definitions were in Hebrew. Later, Saadia enlarged the work, inserting sections dealing with poetical forms, and adding an Arabic introduction. The title was changed to "The Book of Hebrew Poetics". Unfortunately very little of this work has survived, though the Arabic and Hebrew introductions and a small part of the dictionary have been discovered. In his introduction, Saadia expresses frankly his indebtedness to Arabic authors, who served him as models for the compilation of his dictionary. He says: "It is reported that one of the worthies of the Ishmaelites (al-Khalīl? or Ibn Duraid?) wrote a short treatise for them, from which they might learn proper usages. Similarly I have noticed that many Israelites do not observe even the common rules for the correct use of our language... This induced me to compose a work in two parts containing most of the words". Maimonides's summing up of Saadia was that, were it not for him, "the Torah would almost have disappeared from the midst of Israel: for it was he who made manifest what was obscure therein..." He was certainly the founder of Hebrew lexicography. Generally speaking, the Jews used the modern alphabetical order—perhaps from Greek Alexandrine models. But the idea of writing dictionaries came to them from the Arabs. It is significant that the terminology of Hebrew grammar—even to the vowel names—is to a great extent borrowed from Arabic.

On the foundations laid by Saadia, much solid work was based. It reached its apogee with the Kimḥi family in the 12th. and 13th. Century, and considerable work was done in Spain. The first dictionary to encompass the whole range of Biblical language was the "Maḥbaret" of the Spaniard Menahim ben Saruk (910-970)—a contemporary, it will be noted, of al-Azharī. He clearly distinguished between radicals and letters of increase, and realised that no root could

contain more than five radicals. (Probably Arabic lexicography helped him here).

According to Renan, the chief literary characteristic of Syriac is mediocrity, and the chief claim to fame of the Syrians is that they passed on the lore of the Greeks to the Arabs. They may well have played some part in giving the Arabs the dictionary idea. If so, the teacher profited from his pupil<sup>13</sup>. The Syrian lexicographers aimed at explaining scriptural words, especially those of Greek origin which occurred so frequently. They were all familiar with Arabic, and a number of Syriac-Arabic glossaries exist. They used the modern alphabetical order from the start. Abū Zaid Honain ibn Ishāq (died 873 A.D.), a great translator of Greek texts, compiled the first proper Syriac dictionary—an explanation of Greek words in Syriac. At the end of the Ninth Century, Zacharias of Merv supplemented it by adding further entries, but it was a confused work. So Bar ʿAlī (Ishoʿ) wrote a new dictionary based on it<sup>14</sup>. Fortunately this is available in print. In it, Syriac words are followed by Arabic equivalents or definitions. Occasionally further Syriac explanations are added. The fullest and most famous Syriac dictionary was that of Bar Bahlūl (10th. Century). It has been described as a sort of encyclopedia. As in much Arabic lexicography, authorities are mentioned for words included. In the 11th. Century, Elias bar Shīnāya wrote an Arabic-Syriac vocabulary, and this was the basis of Thomas a Novaria's "Thesaurus Arabico-Syro-Latinus" printed in 1636. Thus we see in Syriac lexicography signs of indebtedness to the Arabs, even though there is little evidence of direct imitation. As in Hebrew, grammar and grammatical terminology show similar influence.

Some books have been written on Arabic studies in Europe<sup>15</sup>, but the story of European grammars and dictionaries of Arabic has not yet received full justice. These works have exerted influence in the Arab world itself, as well as in Europe, and the names Erpenius, Castell, Meninski, Golius, Lumsden, Freytag, de Sacy, Wright, Howell form a brilliant galaxy. In lexicography, the Orientalists followed old Arabic models very closely—especially the "Ṣaḥāḥ" and the "Qāmūs"—in respect of their contents, though they naturally adopted the

<sup>13</sup> For some general remarks on Syriac Lexicography, see *Anciennes Littératures Chrétiennes: II, La Littérature Syriacque*, by Ruben Duval, 3rd. edition, Paris 1907; And W. Wright, *A short History of Syriac Literature*, London 1891.

<sup>14</sup> Published edited J. H. Gottheil and Hoffmann, Rome, Vol. I, 1910, Vol. II, 1928.

<sup>15</sup> Notably Johann Fück, *Die Arabischen Studien in Europa*, Leipzig 1955.



modern arrangement. Times have now changed, and August Fischer believed that it was no longer adequate merely to reproduce the contents of the Arabic lexicons. What was wanted was an Arabic lexicon on historical principles, and this meant combing Arabic literature, to see how words changed or modified their meanings over a long period. He was right; but this is a task beyond any one man, and cannot reflect on the pioneers. Moreover, Fischer might have thought differently, had not Golius, Freytag, and Lane already laid the foundations.

Bernard Lewis tells us<sup>16</sup> that William Bedwell (1562-1632) was the father of Arabic studies in England, and that he compiled an Arabic dictionary in 7 volumes, which has not been published. Later, in Cambridge, Eadward Castell (1608-1685) compiled a polyglot dictionary which included Arabic. But the real founder of Arabic lexicography in Europe was Jacobus Golius (1596-1667).<sup>17</sup> He was a pupil of Erpenius, the author of an early Arabic grammar, who lectured on Arabic in Leiden in succession to Joseph Scaliger. (The latter was as much at home in Arabic as in the Classics). Golius began his studies in Theology, Medicine, Philosophy, Mathematics, and Latin, and then turned to Arabic. He spent some time in the Middle East collecting manuscripts, and then returned to Leiden as professor. His "Lexicon Arabico-Latinum" was published in Leiden in 1653, in one volume. It was based chiefly on the "Ṣaḥāḥ", rearranged in the modern dictionary order, but he also consulted many other works, such as the "Qāmūs", "Asās al-Balāgha", and the "Mujmal". It might be mentioned that the need to rearrange Arabic dictionaries constituted one of the main obstacles to European lexicographers, and substantially increased the time their works took. Golius's dictionary held the field for 150 years, until Freytag's appeared. In the meantime, several polyglot dictionaries were published which included Arabic. We have already mentioned Castell's. That of Franz Meninski (1623-1698)<sup>18</sup> was designed chiefly for Turkish.

The "Lexicon Arabico-Latinum" of Georg Wilhelm Freytag (1788-1861) was published in Halle in four volumes between 1830 and 1837. Basically, it is a translation of the "Qāmūs" rearranged, though Freytag also claimed to have consulted the "Ṣaḥāḥ" and Golius's dictionary. It replaced Golius as the standard reference for European orientalists. Freytag was one of several brilliant pupils of the French-

<sup>16</sup> *British Contributions to Arabic Studies*, London 1941.

<sup>17</sup> Fück, *op. cit.*, 79ff.

<sup>18</sup> *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium*, Vienna 1680, 3 Vols.

man De Sacy, whose Arabic grammar broke new ground by avoiding slavish imitation of Arabic native grammarians. But Freytag's *Lexicon*, useful as it was, suffered from the same fault as the "Qāmūs" itself, and could not adequately meet the needs of European students. It was a mere word-list with meanings; whereas what was needed was a European "Lisān" which would not only give the meanings of words explicitly, but would also illustrate them amply by examples drawn from literature—a work which would not only list the significances of some rare word, but quote, perhaps, the very early poem in which the reader consulting the dictionary had encountered it! Edward William Lane attempted to fill that gap.

Lane (1801-1876)<sup>19</sup> was born in Hereford, the son of an Anglican clergyman. He studied classics and mathematics, and intended himself to enter the Church. He gave up his intention of going to Cambridge, when he realised how stifling university life would be for him. He worked as an engraver in London, and became interested in Arabic by the age of 20, for he wrote an abridged Arabic grammar—not published—at that age. In 1825, he set out for Egypt, on the first of his three visits. One aim was undoubtedly health, for he suffered from bronchitis; but he also hoped to pursue his Arabic studies, and perhaps thus to qualify himself for some sort of employment by the British Government. He lived, as far as possible, like an Egyptian, increasing his knowledge of the customs, no less than the language and literature. He returned to England in 1818, but was back in Egypt from 1833 to 1835. On his return, he wrote his "Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians", and his translation of the "Thousand and One Nights". His third visit to Egypt was made between 1842 and 1849, with the express aim of collecting material so as to compile a large Arabic dictionary, which should be as full as possible, and should have the definitions in English, instead of Latin, as with Golius and Freytag. On his previous visit, Lane had heard of the existence of a manuscript of the "Tāj al-ʿArūs", which, being the most copious dictionary in the language, could best serve as the basis of his lexicon. He began to compile his lexicon while still in Egypt, but he had transcriptions made from the "Tāj", and other dictionaries which he meant to use, so that he could continue his work in England. This he did, but, in spite of his extreme industry and single-mindedness, so that he had seriously to curtail all other activities,

<sup>19</sup> See the biography by S. Lane-Poole, printed at the beginning of Vol. VI of Lane's *Lexicon*.



he was still at work on it when he died in 1876. Realising the magnitude of his task, he decided to divide his work into two "books". The first—the longer by far—was to consist of commoner roots. The second was to contain rare roots—in other words, most of the quadriliterals and quinquiliterals. At the time of his death, he was working on Book I, on the root "qadda". Book II was not properly started at all. Parts (volumes) I to VI—up to and including the letter fā<sup>2</sup>—were published between 1863 and 1877. In the Preface to Volume VI, his nephew, Stanley Lane-Poole, wrote: "Of the rest (of the articles), the majority are written but need some collation". When Volumes VII and VIII were published in 1885 and 1893, they showed how inaccurate this statement was. Lane-Poole had given up any serious attempt to supplement his uncle's notes, which were very incomplete for the rest of the lexicon: in fact he published them just as they were. The Lexicon is, therefore, a very inadequate reference work after the article "qadda". Yet what was completed constituted a rich treasure indeed. It is difficult to conceive a better dictionary in the accuracy of its definitions, and the fulness of its examples. It is surely one of the finest dictionaries ever written in any language. From the appearance of its first volume, its fame was assured. Soon afterwards, for instance, we find Blochmann calling for a similar dictionary of Persian. The International Congress of Orientalists has frequently discussed the completion of Lane's dictionary, and also the compiling of a new one on more modern principles. August Fischer<sup>20</sup> intended to write such a dictionary, based on the systematic study of old Arabic texts, as well as the lexicographical works of the Arabs. He believed that there were words and usages in poetry, proverbs and the Ḥadīth not in the old dictionaries. Over a long period, he collected material, and at the time of his death 360,000 pieces of paper were in existence. He believed that a new dictionary must illustrate every word and meaning from actual use in literature. Furthermore, it must be etymological and historical, and must show the use of words in the light of syntax, phraseology, and style. In 1932, an Egyptian Royal Decree called for the writing of a comprehensive historical dictionary of the Arabic language. From 1926 to 1939, Fischer was in Cairo working on the project, assisted by members of the Egyptian Academy. But the war, and Fischer's death, prevented the project coming to fruition.

<sup>20</sup> See Jörg Kraemer, *August Fischers Sammlungen zum Arabischen Lexicon*, in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Band 105, Heft 1, Neue Folge Band 30, 1955, pp. 80ff.

Truth to tell, the project was getting out of hand. Fischer had 575 examples for the word "kull", and 587 for the verb "kāna". He left 17,700 pieces of paper with references to the poet al-Akhtal alone. As J. Kraemer wrote, a major difficulty was to keep the dictionary within practical limits, and combine exhaustiveness with the scientific method. The project was taken up by the International Congress of Orientalists in earnest: a special committee was appointed, and met in Cambridge in 1954. Among the decisions taken was that the arrangement of Fischer's material, which was going on in Tübingen under the direction of J. Kraemer, should concentrate on the letter kāf and what followed it, so as to supplement Lane's *Lexicon*. The first fascicule of the new dictionary, beginning kāf, was published in 1957<sup>21</sup>. Words are defined in both German and English—but not French. Apart from the word headings, all other Arabic material is in Latin transliteration, as in Platt's *Hindustani* and Steingass's *Persian* dictionaries. This probably saves space, and makes for cheapness, but it is not really satisfactory. So one day, the grand scheme planned and half-finished by Lane, and based on those Arabic dictionaries which it has been our task to describe, will be completed. In this connection, mention must be made of another outstanding Arabic dictionary which aimed to supplement Lane—R. Dozy's "*Supplément aux Dictionnaires Arabes*"<sup>22</sup>. Dozy included many post-classical words which are not likely to appear in Kraemer's Dictionary, particularly those peculiar to Arab Spain. Dozy was a specialist on the history of the Arabs in Spain. Another, if more humble, supplement to Lane, is E. Fagnan's "*Additions aux Dictionnaires Arabes*". Though published in Algiers<sup>23</sup> it is not confined to Maghribi usages.

To do full justice to European Arabic lexicography, many more dictionaries would have to be described. For modern Arabic we have, for instance, Wortabet's in English, Wehr's admirable work in German, and Baranov's in Russian. Tribute would also have to be paid to Elias's several dictionaries, Arabic-English and vice-versa, published in Egypt and frequently brought up to date. They have not all the features which a European requires—broken plurals and verb-vowelings for example—but they have benefitted countless students. Earlier English works by Badger and Spiro, and the French works of

<sup>21</sup> J. Kraemer and Helmut Gätje, *Wörterbuch der Klassischen Arabischen Sprache*, Wiesbaden 1957 — Erste Lieferung.

<sup>22</sup> Leiden 1881, 2 vols. Paris 1927.

<sup>23</sup> 1923.



Belot and Bercher would have also to be included. But the mere catalogue<sup>24</sup>, incomplete though it be, must suffice. One last general observation must be made. We have seen that the Arabic lexicographers, though they understood the principles of the derivation of words from roots, never learned how to arrange derivations under their roots. This problem was solved by the European lexicographers: indeed, Lane's classification of verbal derived forms<sup>25</sup> has never been bettered. The scheme used by Europeans, whereby under any root, the verbs come first, in accordance with the number of letters of increase which they contain; then the nouns, beginning with the simplest ones, and ending with the longest ones, especially those beginning with an additional mīm; has been adopted by the Arabs themselves. It is not quite the same order—so far as the verbs are concerned—used by most Arab grammarians, and by al-Zamakhsharī in his Arabic-Persian Dictionary.

It would be rash to postulate direct influence by Arabic lexicography in the rise of European lexicography. In Europe, lexicography was stimulated by the Renaissance and the Reformation, and by nascent nationalism. There was practically nothing before the Fifteenth Century, and most of the earlier efforts were bilingual. Of these, the most were concerned with Latin, though we do hear of English-Italian and English-French vocabularies, and similar works<sup>26</sup>. The Renaissance led to a revival of interest in Greek studies, and this called for the printing of Greek dictionaries. Aldus Minutius's "Dictionarium Graecum" was printed at Venice in 1497. Henricus Stephanus's "Thesaurus Linguae Graecae" appeared in Paris in 1572. Several of the old Greek dictionaries to which we referred in Chapter One were printed during this period. The Reformation led to Bible study in the original Greek and Hebrew, and even in Syriac. We have mentioned Edmund Castell's "Lexicon Heptaglotton", published in London in 1686. It contained Hebrew, Chaldaean, Syriac, Samaritan, Ethiopic and Arabic. Earlier still, in 1612, V. Schindler's "Lexicon Pentaglotton" had appeared in Hanover: it was in Hebrew, Chaldaean, Syriac, Talmudic Rabbinic, and Arabic. J. H. Hottinger's "Etymologicum Orientale Sive Lexicon Harmonicum Heptaglotton" (Frankfurt, 1661), dealt with Hebrew, Chaldaean, Syriac, Arabic,

<sup>24</sup> For dates and details see W. Zaunmüller, *Bibliographisches Handbuch der Sprachwörterbücher*, New York and Stuttgart 1958. This is an excellent bibliography, and satisfies a pressing need.

<sup>25</sup> *Lexicon* I, p. xxviii.

<sup>26</sup> In this connection, see Starnes and Noyes, *The English Dictionary from Carvedrey to Johnson*, University of North Carolina Press, 1946, pp. 1 and 2.

Samaritan, Ethiopic, and Talmudic-Rabbinic. For the Arabic portions of these works, the compilers undoubtedly drew on old Arabic dictionaries—especially the “*Qāmūs*”.

For the development of European lexicography proper, however, it was necessary that there should be national languages. In the Middle Ages, Latin was the language of religion, government and diplomacy. Languages like English, French, and German were split into numerous dialects, and were little used in learned works. But national literatures were steadily developing, individual dialects being gradually recognised as the *lingua franca* or literary language. This process was furthered by great writers like Chaucer in England, and Dante in Italy. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, strong monarchies were established, and kings began to encourage the use of the native tongue. Thus in the year 1539 in France, the Villers-Cotteret Ordonnance laid it down that, in future, justice should be dispensed in “*langaige maternel francoise*”. It is quite a coincidence that, in the same year, the first real French dictionary appeared. Vernacular translations of the Bible like Luther’s in German also encouraged this process.

With all these factors creating the need for dictionaries, it would be rash to ascribe to Arabic any part in this process. To begin with, Arabic did not offer an acceptable dictionary arrangement. When Europeans compiled their dictionaries, they took the modern alphabetical order either from the Greeks or from common sense. All we can say is that Arabic lexicography was a part of the heritage of dictionary compilation, and that it played a part, at any rate, in the polyglot dictionaries which were primarily concerned with Biblical language.

Spain is a special case. Here, Arabic was a live language, and Spanish—or rather Castillian—had a struggle to supplant it, as the Christians of the North drove out the Moors in the South. Only in 1492 did Ferdinand and Isabella annex the Kingdom of Granada; and even then, it took some time to abolish the use of Arabic altogether. It is not surprising that bilingual Arabic dictionaries were compiled in Spain in the Middle Ages. The earliest—Arabic-Latin—dates from the 11th. Century, and has been edited by Seybold<sup>27</sup>. It is a general alphabetical dictionary, including even common words, such as “*tawaj-jaha*”. In about 1275, Raimundus Martinus composed his “*Vocabu-*

<sup>27</sup> Berlin 1900.



lista in Arabica" in vulgar Castillian<sup>28</sup>. In the late Fifteenth Century, two Spanish-Latin Dictionaries were compiled: Alfonso Fernandez de Palencia's "Universal Vocabulario en Latin y en Romance", of 1490; and Antonius de Nebrija (or Lebrixa)'s "Lexicon e Sermone Latine in Ispaniensem"; published at Salamanca in 1492. The latter was used by the author of the next, and last, Arabic-Spanish vocabulary we have to mention. The Spanish conquest of Granada was followed by a determined effort on the part of the Church to convert the Moors to Christianity. The Archbishop of Granada, Ferdinand de Talavera, commissioned Pedro de Alcala to write his "Vocabulista Aravigo en Letra Castellana". It was published in 1505<sup>29</sup>. The Arabic words are in Latin transliteration—and according to a very imperfect system. For example, the letters dāl, ḡād, and zā<sup>30</sup> are all represented by d; *shīn* and *zāy* by z. This, plus the fact that the Arabic is the spoken dialect of fifteenth-century Granada, made it hard for Dozy to identify a number of the words. Alcala also compiled an Arabic Grammar (1505), which is again based on the colloquial, and interesting for that fact alone. Being free from Arabic grammatical terminology, it is an unusual work. Not until De Sacy was an Arabic Grammar composed again specially designed for the use of Europeans familiar only with their own grammatical system. The grammar, like the vocabulary, was in Latin characters.

To show the position of Arabic lexicography in the general history of world lexicography, and to enable the reader to make instructive comparisons, brief reference must now be made to the course of lexicography in modern European languages. This will certainly throw into relief the outstanding success of the Arabs. From their first dictionary, it took them five centuries to produce an exhaustive dictionary on a large scale. In England, even with the advantages of printing and modern ideas, over 300 years were required. Nothing so full has yet been produced in France, and the Germans, after a century of work, have not yet completed a similar project.

The French dictionary of 1539 already referred-to was the "Dictionnaire Francois latin, autrement dict les mots françois avec les manieres duser diceulx tourne en latin", compiled by Robert Étienne (Stephanus)<sup>30</sup>. It contained about 20,000 words arranged alphabeti-

<sup>28</sup> Published ed. Schiaparelli, Florence 1871. See Dozy, *Supplément aux Dictionnaires Arabes*, Vol. 1, page x.

<sup>29</sup> See Fück, *op. cit.*, 29ff; Dozy, *Supplément*, i, x. This vocabulary was published, edited Paul de Lagarde, in 1883.

<sup>30</sup> See Elizabeth Armstrong, *Robert Étienne, Royal Printer*, Cambridge 1954.

cally under their roots. It was really the reverse of his Latin-French dictionary of 1538, which, in its turn, had grown out of his "Thesaurus Linguae Latinae" of 1531. But though Étienne's main interest was Latin, he had, in fact, laid the foundations of French lexicography. In 1616 appeared Jean Nicot's "Thrézor de la langue francoyse". He had previously composed a French-Latin dictionary. When Richelieu founded the French Academy in 1634, that body conceived the plan of a full and authoritative dictionary. Not until 1694 was the work completed, when it was printed, of all places, in Amsterdam. In it words were not listed in strict alphabetical order, as might be desired, but under their roots. The roots are, of course, in alphabetical order. Many French dictionaries have been compiled since then, perhaps the most notable being that by E. Littré, published between 1873 and 1878, in 4 volumes and a supplement. It has been described—very rashly—as "the greatest dictionary ever compiled by one man".

In Italy, the Renaissance brought great activity in Latin lexicography. Calepinus's Latin Dictionary was first published in Reggio in 1504, and has frequently been reprinted and revised. It is really a polyglot dictionary, giving equivalents of the Latin words in Greek and the major European languages. The standard authoritative Italian dictionary until recent times was the "Vocabulario degli Accademici della Crusca". It was an attempt to purify the language. First published in Venice in 1612, it was last revised in an edition of 11 volumes printed between 1863 and 1923.

The first proper English dictionary was Robert Cawdrey's "A Tabel Alphabeticall conteyning and teaching the true writing and understanding of hard unusuall English wordes borrowed from the Hebrew, Greek, Latine or French, etc.". It was printed in London in 1604<sup>31</sup>. As its title suggests, it had a limited aim, and it was a small octavo volume. Previously there had been a number of bilingual dictionaries in English, mostly for teaching Latin. Of these a few, like the well-known "Promptorium Parvulorum" of about 1440, were in alphabetical order. Cawdrey used abbreviations—k for "a kind of", g or gr for "Greek", and § for French words. Succeeding English dictionaries were still for difficult words only, for some time—for example, J. Bullokar's "English Expositour" of 1616, Thomas Blount's "Glossographia" of 1656, and Edward Phillip's "New World of English Words" of 1658. But gradually the dictionary genre was steered into more general channels. J. K(ersey)'s "New English Dictionary" of

<sup>31</sup> Sarmes and Noyes, *op. cit.*, 13ff.



1732 claims to be a "compleat collection of the most proper and significant words commonly used in the language". The word "commonly" is important here; but the word "proper" is also significant. The function of the dictionary was now to guide taste in the choice of words. The first half of the Eighteenth Century was a period of tremendous lexicographical activity in England. We even hear of four identical dictionaries being published under different names between 1735 and 1741<sup>32</sup>. Samuel Johnson's "Dictionary of the English Language" (London, 1755) has secured fame because of the reputation of the author in other spheres. But, while his definitions often reveal his personal prejudices, it was a full dictionary, not one of rare or selected words only. Moreover, as he said, it was illustrated from the best authors. From it, we must pass to the Oxford English Dictionary, which began life as J. H. Murray's "A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles", in 1888, and was concluded in 1933, in 12 volumes and a supplement volume. England had at last her "Lisān".

Spain and Germany must be passed over very quickly. Again, we find bilingual Latin dictionaries at first, but it does not seem that Spain progressed any the quicker for the example of the Arabs. Everything Arab became unpopular, and the unfortunate Moors were hounded out of the country. The Spanish Academy's dictionary (*Diccionario de la lengua española*) first appeared in 6 volumes between 1726 and 1739. In its time, it was the finest European dictionary. Frequently revised, it is still the standard work. In Germany, the Grimm brothers' "Deutsches Wörterbuch" began to appear in 1854. Although by the end of 1957, the letter z had been reached, there remained still one or two earlier portions unfinished.

We have reached the end of our history of Arabic lexicography. When we compare it with what had been done by other peoples previously, and what has been done since in Europe, we are bound to salute it as a monument to thought and industry deserving of the highest praise. Only a people with a very high standard of culture and an extensive literature could require a "Lisān" and a "Qāmūs": only truly outstanding scholars could provide them. Without them, and the other dictionaries we have discussed, much Arabic literature would have remained imperfectly understood, even by the Arabs themselves. Without them, many facts concerning Islam would have been

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 139ff.

hard to understand. Without them, the great Islamic sciences would have been severely handicapped. One final caveat is necessary. The lexicography was undoubtedly Arabic; it was not Arab. Readers will have noticed the large part played by Persians in it, not to mention natives of Transoxiana, Armenia and Spain. We have been compelled, in this book, to refer constantly to "the Arabs", for want of a better short description of the vast multitudes of many races who spoke, wrote, and even thought, in Arabic. They were not, by any means, the first people to compile dictionaries of merit: but al-Khalil may well have been the first man to attempt to register the complete vocabulary content of any language. We have seen that, by this, he really meant all the roots, rather than all the words. But this is only one illustration of the fact that the "Arabs" had the right attitude and the right temperament for lexicography.



# A CHRONOLOGICAL CHART OF ARABIC LEXICOGRAPHY.

(According to the dictionary arrangements used).

A.D.  
600                      700                      800                      900                      1000                      1100                      1200                      1300                      1400                      1500

AL-KHALIL

IBN DURĀID

IBN SĪDA

AL-ZUBAIDI

## I. THE KHALIL METHOD.

AL-AZHARĪ

ŠĀHIB IBN  
‘ABBĀD

AL QĀLĪ \*

## II. THE RHYME ORDER.

AL-JAUHART

IBN BARRĪ

IBN MANZŪR

AL-FIRŪZĀBĀDĪ

AL-ŠAGHĀNĪ

ABŪ ‘AMR  
AL-ŠAIBĀNĪ

AL-SIJIS TĀNĪ

## IIIa. THE KUFAN METHOD.

IBN WALLĀD

AL-JAWĀLIQĪ

ABŪ HILĀL  
AL-ASKARĪ

## IIIb. THE MODERN DICTIONARY ARRANGEMENT.

AL RĀGHĪB  
AL-İŞFAHĀNĪ

IBN AL-AṬHĪR

AL-ZAMAKH  
-SHARĪ

AL MUṬARRIZĪ





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## NOTES

- The familiar forms of proper names are given.
- The definite article "al" is not reckoned in deciding the position of proper names in the alphabetical order.
- References in footnotes are indicable by (a).
- Main references are shown in italics.

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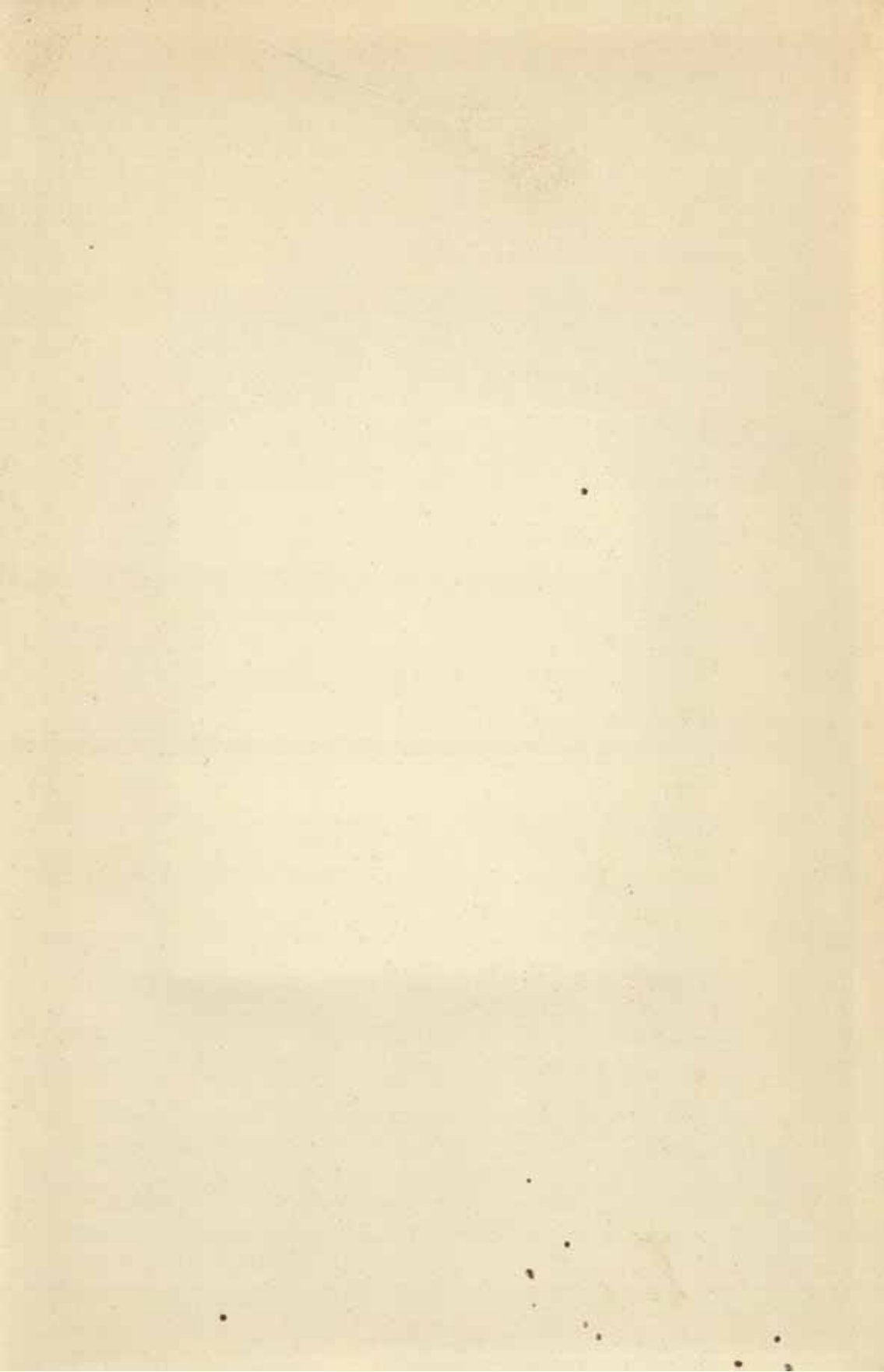
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